

Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 11

Primaltwin

I Eat Tomatoes

(我吃西红柿)

Story Description:

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the multiverse was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller...than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 1: The Culprit is Ji Ning

The old man looked at the golden-robed man. His voice was rather shrill, and his gaze was filled with grief. “My child Nong died?”

“Patriarch, Youngflame Nong’s spirit-tablet has shattered,” the golden-robed man said respectfully, not daring to show the slightest bit of discourtesy.

“Lishui, your master has failed you.” Patriarch Arcanum shut his eyes, tears appearing at the corner. Immortal Lishui was the female disciple who he had loved the dearest; the two had identical dispositions, and Patriarch Arcanum had all but viewed her as he would his own daughter. Unfortunately, Immortal Lishui had been too arrogant when facing her Celestial Tribulation, and in the end, her spirit had been destroyed!

The Celestial Tribulation was the greatest tribulation in any individual’s life. Overcoming it meant becoming a carefree Celestial Immortal; failing it, for the lucky, meant becoming a Loose Immortal, while the unlucky would have their souls destroyed.

Immortal Lishui had simply been too arrogant. At the last stage, she refused to give up, and had chosen to continue to fight head on! And so... she died!

Patriarch Arcanum had been griefstricken by this for an extremely long period of time. Fortunately, Immortal Lishui had a son named Youngflame Nong. Patriarch Arcanum had supported him from an early age, wanting to make up for his failure with Immortal Lishui by taking care of Youngflame Nong. He had given Youngflame Nong his full support this entire time, and had insisted on pushing Youngflame Nong onto the position of Godplume Duke.

Unfortunately...Youngflame Nong had died! Died at the Wanxiang level!

“I arranged a Fiendgod to protect him. That Fiendgod should’ve been able to withstand even a supreme Loose Immortal. How could he have died? How? Who killed him?” Patriarch Arcanum revealed a look of explosive, incomparably terrifying savagery in his eyes. “He was also

carrying the Greater Teleportation Dao-seal I gave him; even in a completely different world, he would've been able to teleport straight back."

The golden-robed man said hurriedly, "Patriarch, Youngflame Nong should have died within the Witchriver Immortal Estate."

"Witchriver Immortal Estate?" Patriarch Arcanum was instantly enraged. "Tests, tests, always the stupid tests. What's the big deal about becoming Godplume Duke?!"

Although he was angry, Patriarch Arcanum knew that this was in accordance with the rules of the clan; they couldn't be easily discarded.

"Where is the Witchriver Immortal Estate?" Patriarch Arcanum asked.

"Within Stillwater Commandery. I'll lead the way for you, Patriarch," the golden-robed man said respectfully.

"Fine. Let's go." Patriarch Arcanum gave the order.

Soon, the nine Flood Dragons flew out, with that Immortal carriage behind them. Patriarch Arcanum remained seated within, while the golden-robed man sat in the front, in the position normally reserved for servants, carriage drivers, and bodyguards.

Swoosh!

The Immortal carriage soared into the skies, flying out off the volcano.

The Immortal estate had been hidden in a separate world which was only connected to the Grand Xia Dynasty's world by a single corridor. If one did not know where the connection point was, there would be no way to find the exact location of the corridor, even if one was a Celestial Immortal. Thus, one would naturally be unable to enter that world.

Since the Youngflame clan had arranged for Youngflame Nong to take his trials there, they naturally had, early on, sent clan elders bearing the key to the Immortal estate into the estate. They had done a quick surveillance, assuring themselves that the 'Witchriver Immortal Estate' was a place which would pose something of a challenge to Youngflame

Nong, but which absolutely couldn't put him in mortal danger. Only then did they bestow the key onto Youngflame Nong and have him come.

This was why the Youngflame clan had the precise location of the Witchriver Immortal Estate.

Whoosh.

In the air above the Skyrove Mountains, there appeared an Immortal carriage that was pulled by nine Flood Dragons.

The golden-robed man at the front of the carriage pulled out and unfurled a scroll while saying, "This scroll is of the Skyrove Mountains, and it also marks the location where the Skyrove Mountains connects to the Witchriver Immortal Estate. It's right in front of us."

They gave it a careful glance and did a quick comparison. Soon, the Immortal carriage arrived within the gorge. "Right there, on the walls of the gorge," the golden-robed man said.

Patriarch Arcanum, seated within the carriage, had a very sinister look on his face. He barked, "This cliff wall is enormous. Where, exactly, is the connection point? The Witchriver Immortal Estate is in a separate dimension; unless you can find the exact point, there's no way to enter it."

"Patriarch, please wait a moment." The golden-robed man immediately executed a secret art, causing a golden, glowing rune to appear in his palm.

Rumble...

A golden rune began to glow somewhere on the cliff wall as well.

"Right there. That's the place where the Witchriver Immortal Estate connects to our world," the golden-robed man said, pointing forward. "The clan elders set a secret mark there long ago. That's the mark."

"Open up." Patriarch Arcanum's gaze turned incredibly sharp as he released his full power. To forcibly break through the defenses of an Immortal estate was no easy task. Spots of starlight began to appear in the surrounding area. The countless specks of starlight seemed dreamlike

and illusory. At the same time, two giant hands of starlight began to coalesce, then tore towards the front.

Riiiiip. Space itself tore apart, a corridor appearing. One could vaguely see through the corridor that there was an Immortal estate world on the other side.

If one had not known the exact connection location, however, the only result of this rip would have been the void.

“The Witchriver Immortal Estate? So it truly is here.” Patriarch Arcanum said coldly, “Wait here then.”

“Alright.” The golden-robed man responded with respect.

Swish. Patriarch Arcanum rose to his feet, then took a single step which carried him straight through the torn-open corridor and into the Immortal estate world.

The Immortal estate world was completely empty. With but a thought, Patriarch Arcanum spread his sense out to cover the entire world, capable of discovering everything within it.

“There isn’t a single living thing here?” Patriarch Arcanum was startled. But of course, how could he know that when Ning fled, he had told the monstrous races that there was a high chance a Celestial Immortal would come. The monsters had been so terrified that the monstrous Dao-soldiers had seized all of their kinsmen and pulled them onto warships in quite a brutal and ruthless fashion, using all sorts of cultivation techniques to quickly drag and send away one batch after another. In but the time needed to boil a cup of tea, the entire population of monsters had completely fled.

“But those items in those monstrous mountain lairs...those lake lairs...those estates...there’s fruit and wine placed out in the open. Clearly, they just left a short time ago.” Patriarch Arcanum turned his gaze towards a nearby Skypillar of golden light. “The five palaces of Immortal Witchriver. After my child Nong came, he definitely would’ve entered one of these five palaces. Most likely, he died within one of them!”

With a single step, Patriarch Arcanum appeared before the Dao Repository Palace. He then stretched out his finger and pointed towards the distance. “Temporal Inversion!”

The ‘Temporal Inversion’ technique was an incomparably powerful technique. Generally speaking, only Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals who had incredibly profound insights into the Dao of Time were capable of using it. If their insights were insufficient, then they would have to wait until they surpassed the restrictions of the Three Realms and became Celestial Immortals before they would be able to use this art.

Whooosh....

The scenery in the area began to change as time began to rapidly flow backwards. It flowed all the way back to the point where Youngflame Nong used the Wildcore and the ‘Lock’ scroll before just barely bypassing the monstrous Dao-soldiers and entering the Dao Repository Palace. And then, time began to progress forward at a normal pace. Soon, Youngflame Nong led Ning and the others out of the Dao Repository Palace.

“My boy Nong entered this palace, then left this palace; he didn’t die here.” Patriarch Arcanum followed Youngflame Nong’s warship as it flew forward. As he did so, the scene in the second location began to replay once more.

Youngflame Nong, Xue Hongyi, Ji Ning, and the others rode the warship all the way to the fifth palace, the Witchriver Palace, where the monsters had set up a tight guard. Patriarch Arcanum just flew behind them.

Youngflame Nong used the black and white disc, then immediately entered the fifth palace.

“All of the monsters were gathered here, rather than being dispersed in the other palaces. My boy Nong, in turn, was willing to pay any price to enter this palace. This should have been the final palace he entered.” Patriarch Arcanum’s figure turned blurry for a moment, and then he reappeared within the fifth palace, the Witchriver Palace.

Within the Witchriver Palace.

Patriarch Arcanum once more used the Temporal Inversion technique, replaying the scene in front of him, starting from when Youngflame Nong and the others entered the palace.

The breaking of the illusory formation...the entering of the main hall...the celebratory banquet...Ninelotus' dance...Ji Ning's anger...the attack of many golems...Ji Ning using the Windwing Evasion...one scene after another appeared. Even the dialogue was repeated.

"Eh?" Patriarch Arcanum suddenly frowned. "That's the Windwing Evasion!"

In the past, for the sake of completing and perfecting their copy of this divine ability, Patriarch Arcanum had personally soul-scoured some members of the Yuchi clan; he naturally was quite familiar with the Windwing Evasion. He immediately recognized that Ji Ning used the Windwing Evasion.

The scenes continued to change at high speed. Youngflame Nong tried to force Ji Ning to cuff himself with the godlock chains; Xue Hongyi then suddenly called out that Ji Ning's mother was named Yuchi Snow. Instantly, a major battle began!

Xiangliu Fang, by himself, was able to block Mu Northson, Ninelotus, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver.

Xue Hongyi went to fight Ji Ning. However...Ji Ning's power suddenly increased explosively, causing the entire hall to be filled with countless swords. A single, dazzling sword-light executed Xue Hongyi.

"Grand Dao Domain?" Patriarch Arcanum continued to watch, and as he did, his magical power continued to rapidly deplete; Temporal Inversion, after all, was no ordinary technique. "This kid named Ji Ning who knows the Windwing Evasion, he's only at the Wanxiang level. Even if he comprehended a Grand Dao Domain, he should've been far from being a match for the Fiendgod bodyguard my boy Nong had."

Indeed, Ning was defeated by a single palm blow from Xiangliu Fang. But right at that moment...that black loop had flown out.

The souls of Youngflame Nong, Xiangliu Fang, and the Redscale Salamander were all devoured and extinguished.

“This, this, this is...” Patriarch Arcanum’s eyes were filled with shock and rage. “A Soulslayer Loop? How could this kid have possibly procured such a treasure? Can it be that a major power died during one of the huge, chaotic battles of the Fiendgod Era, and the Soulslayer Sphere ended up as a relic somewhere, where the kid found it?”

Luck. It was hard to say what luck might bring.

A backwater bumpkin might be lucky enough to acquire a heaven-defying treasure! In fact, a lucky kid who offered an old man a bowl of water might end up finding that the old man was one of the major powers of the Three Realms.

“My child Nong didn’t have bad luck, but he actually ended up dying to this Ji Ning of the Black-White College. For this Ji Ning to have procured such a treasure...it seems he must have been blessed with tremendous luck. However, no matter how lucky he might be, he won’t be able to overcome my divine abilities.” Patriarch Arcanum’s eyes became filled with a cold light. “Those survivors were Yu Wei, Mu Northson, Vastriver, and Ninelotus; all of them are disciples of the Black-White College.”

“Black-White College.”

Patriarch Arcanum turned, once more ripping a corridor through space, at the point where the estate was linked with the outside world of the Grand Xia Empire.

Swoosh!

Within the Skyrove Mountains. The golden-robed man had been waiting here the entire time, only to see Patriarch Arcanum tear a corridor through space and emerge through it.

“Patriarch,” the golden-robed man said.

“The culprit was Ji Ning of the Black-White College.” Patriarch Arcanum looked at him. “Do you know him?”

The golden-robed man was the Godplume Duke; how could he possibly know about one particular genius within Stillwater Commandery? He immediately shook his head. "I do not."

"Then let's go straight to Stillwater City. First, we'll do a thorough investigation regarding Ji Ning at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain; then, we shall go to the Black-White College! Those other disciples are most likely still within the Black-White College," Patriarch Arcanum instructed coldly.

"Yes." The golden-robed man immediately commanded the Immortal carriage to leave.

The nine Flood Dragons pulled the Immortal carriage, quickly departing from the Skyrove Mountains. They flew through the skies, heading towards Stillwater City.

Chapter 2: The Eight Loose Immortals of the Black-White College

In the skies above Stillwater City. There were nine Flood Dragons, pulling an Immortal carriage behind them, which had come to a halt above the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.

“Patriarch, wait here. I will go investigate Ji Ning in detail,” the Godplume Duke said respectfully.

“Also, Ji Ning’s mother is named Yuchi Snow; purchase an intelligence report on her as well.” Patriarch Arcanum remained seated aboard the Immortal carriage as he calmly gave the orders.

“Yes.”

The Godplume Duke immediately flew down into the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. Just a short while later, the Godplume Duke walked out from within it. With a blurring movement, he flew back into the sky, next to Patriarch Arcanum, respectfully handing him a book with two characters on it – JI NING.

“Just Ji Ning’s?” Patriarch Arcanum frowned.

“Ji Ning’s mother, Yuchi Snow, was a minor Xiantian lifeform who hadn’t accomplished any major deeds; the only record of her is that she had a son named Ji Ning. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain informed me that there is virtually no intelligence regarding Yuchi Snow, and all of what they have is in this tome,” the Godplume Duke explained.

Patriarch Arcanum nodded softly.

Although the Heavenly Treasures Mountain’s intelligence unit was spread throughout the world, they weren’t as all-knowing as the heavens themselves. They, too, needed to engage in deep, careful investigations in order to find things out. Yuchi Snow and her family’s flight was a very secretive thing to begin with; even the Youngflame clan hadn’t been able to catch these final few fish who had fled their net. It wasn’t strange for the Heavenly Treasures Mountain to be unaware of it as well.

“Ji Ning? He’s actually this young?” Patriarch Arcanum, upon seeing the report, was shocked.

His beloved Youngflame Nong had trained for more than a century. Amongst Wanxiang Adepts, that was actually quite young, because Wanxiang Adepts could live for up to eight hundred years. Unexpectedly, this kid who had killed the Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang as well as Youngflame Nong, this kid who had already reached the Grand Dao Domain level in the Dao of the Sword, was actually this young!

“The more impressive his potential, the more he needs to die!” A cold light flashed through Patriarch Arcanum’s eyes. He quickly flipped through the report, finishing it.

“Swallow Mountain? Serpentwing Lake?” Patriarch Arcanum hummed to himself, then instructed, “Come, let’s go to the Black-White College.”

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The Black-White College had made thorough preparations long ago. Mu Northson, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver had used the closest teleportation array to first go straight to the Crimson Dragon Mountains, and then from those mountains to Stillwater City; they had moved fairly quickly, and as soon as they had returned to the Black-White College, they had immediately reported this event to the higher-ups.

The Headmaster’s Palace of the Black-White College. This was also the place where they welcomed important guests.

Within the palace were multiple seated figures. On one side of the palace sat the black-robed, black-haired Immortal Diancai, along with Immortal Fivecraze and the rest of the Immortals. There were a total of eight of them. Behind them stood Headmaster Jadesea and three of the third-generation disciples; Rainbowflame Fairy Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, and Mu Northson.

In front of them sat Patriarch Arcanum and the Godplume Duke.

“I imagine you all know why I have come here today.” Patriarch Arcanum sat there and spoke calmly as he swept his gaze across the

group of Immortals before him.

Eight Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals.

Virtually all of the Loose Immortals of the Black-White College who were normally in closed-door meditation, in seclusion, or adventuring had returned. Aside from a single Loose Immortal who had already left this major world and wouldn't be able to make it back in time, the other eight had all returned. The Immortal cultivators of the Black-White College were all absolute elites; they all had mastered a complete Dao-Path, which was a prerequisite for them even reaching the Primal Daoist level. Only after mastering two Dao-Paths, however, were they permitted to break through to the Earth Immortal level!

This is why the Primal Daoists of the Black-White College were comparable to Loose Immortals in combat power. As for the Loose Immortals of the Black-White College...each of them were capable of fending off ten 'normal' Loose Immortals. Each of them had the combat power of a supreme Loose Immortal.

"Of course we know." The short old man, Immortal Fivecraze, chuckled as he spoke. "Youngflame Nong of your Youngflame clan was killed by our disciple, Ji Ning, correct?"

"Correct." Patriarch Arcanum replied calmly.

"If he died, he died. When young people are out adventuring, it's normal for them fight and kill each other. If you are weaker than someone else, you die. That's normal," the short elder said. "If you have to blame someone, you can only blame yourself for being too weak. Generally speaking, the clans and sects won't intervene."

For example, the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains; Ning's group had often fought internally and quite a few had died, but no sect had ever come for reprisal against another.

Patriarch Arcanum's gaze instantly changed. It became sharp.

"However, if you, senior Arcanum, doted on this Youngflame Nong to the point where you would lower yourself to personally attack Ji Ning,

there's nothing our Black-White College can do about it." The short elder sighed, "So...I really don't understand why, senior Arcanum, you have come to our Black-White College?"

"Hand over Ji Ning," Patriarch Arcanum said coldly, "And this matter will have nothing to do with your Black-White College. Otherwise... hmph!"

Instantly, the faces of the Immortals of the Black-White College changed.

Hand over Ji Ning?

"Forget it!" The black-robed, black-haired Immortal Diancai snapped coldly, "Ji Ning is a disciple of our Black-White College. If he were to die while adventuring in the outside world, we wouldn't blame others...but you want us to hand him over? Are you dreaming? And, let me tell you something – so long as Ji Ning returns to the Black-White College, your Youngflame clan can forget about harming a single hair on his head."

"Senior Arcanum, we respect you as a Celestial Immortal, but our Black-White College, which has existed for so many generations, isn't so easily abused either," the short, elderly Immortal Fivecraze warned coldly as well.

"Our Black-White College has our own rules; if our disciples die while adventuring, we won't blame others, but once they return, then they will absolutely be protected by us." The tall, muscular man wrapped up in chain links spoke out in a loud, rumbling voice, his eyes seemed to be filled with thunder.

Patriarch Arcanum's face sank. "Oh, so your Black-White College wishes to become enemies with my Youngflame clan." Patriarch Arcanum swept these Immortals with his gaze.

The Youngflame clan was, indeed, powerful. It was much more powerful than even the Northmont clan of Stillwater. It had more than a thousand Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals; from this, one could imagine how mighty they were! However, just because they were powerful didn't mean they could freely abuse other powers; for example, the Black-White

College was located within Stillwater City. Who would dare launch a massive attack within Stillwater City? There would only be one result – becoming wanted criminals of the Grand Xia Dynasty!

As for fighting in the outside world?

Every single Loose Immortal of the Black-White College was top-tier; each of them were capable of fighting against ten Loose Immortals! If they completely focused on fleeing, it would be very hard to deal with them.

“It isn’t that we wish to become enemies with you; rather, your Youngflame clan is forcing us to become enemies. If our Black-White College can’t even protect our own disciples, what the hell type of College would we be?” Immortal Diancai replied coldly.

“If that’s the case!” Patriarch Arcanum coldly rose to his feet. “Then don’t blame the Youngflame clan for our future actions. Let’s go!”

“Yes, Patriarch.” The Godplume Duke followed by his side.

But just as Patriarch Arcanum was about to lead the Godplume Duke to leave, a voice suddenly rang out. “Brother Arcanum.”

A hunchbacked old man suddenly walked in. His hair was completely white, and his eyebrows drooped downwards. He was leaning against a wooden cane as he walked in.

Patriarch Arcanum was momentarily startled. Then, he let out a cold laugh. “Hunchmont? You are still alive?”

“You haven’t died yet; how could I?” The hunchbacked old man laughed.

“Senior Hunchmont.”

The eight Loose Immortals of the Black-White College all rose to their feet and saluted respectfully. Celestial Immortal Hunchmont...he was one of the most famous Celestial Immortal Patriarchs in the history of the Northmont clan. However, because he had lived for so very long, many outside schools and sects thought him to be dead; after all, Celestial Immortals would occasionally engage in battles against each other for

the sake of their tribe or for certain treasures. After many battles, some would eventually fall.

“The Black-White College belongs to our Stillwater Commandery.” The hunchbacked elder leaned against his cane. “Arcanum, if you want to deal with their disciples, there is nothing they can do to stop you; why must you force the Black-White College to hand Ji Ning over? If you have the ability to do so, go ahead and deal with him yourself; our Northmont clan absolutely won’t interfere. But if you were to deal against the Black-White College, you would be stepping beyond your bounds! Stillwater Commandery belongs to the Northmont clan!”

Patriarch Arcanum’s face sank. Although the Youngflame clan was even more powerful than the Northmont clan, there was a limit to their strength; the Northmont clan held a marquidom, and it had existed since the Fiendgod Era as well. After the passage of so many years...who knew how many trump cards the Northmont clan of Stillwater might be holding in secret?

“Fine. Since you, Hunchmont, have spoken out...” Patriarch Arcanum nodded. “Then I won’t quibble with the Black-White College. However, this Ji Ning...he absolutely must die! If anyone tries to stop me, I’ll kill them as well! Fujun, let’s go.”

Patriarch Arcanum led the Godplume Duke out of the Headmaster’s Palace. They boarded the Immortal carriage, then quickly flew into the skies and disappeared.

“Senior Huchmont.” Immortal Fivecraze walked over, watching as Patriarch Arcanum flew away aboard the Immortal carriage. “This Patriarch Arcanum seems to be a bit too arrogant.”

“That’s just the way he is. He’s like a madman.” The hunchbacked elder laughed. “Don’t worry about him. But that Ji Ning of yours...you had best not interfere. Given how murderous Patriarch Arcanum seems to be feeling right now, you won’t be able to stop him. Alright, it is time for me to go. Such a pity. Ji Ning was a fine young sapling. What a pity.”

And then, the hunchbacked elder left.

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Within another world. The underwater estate.

Ning had just appeared within the main hall. He immediately saw the giant yellow bear and the old black bull.

“Seniors,” Ning was about to speak out.

“You caused a huge mess in the outside world, eh?” The giant yellow bear said, “You were in such a frantic hurry to order all of the people off of Brightheart Island.”

“I did cause a huge mess, yes,” Ning said hurriedly. “I have...”

The giant yellow bear interrupted Ning. “Let me ask you this; have you completed your arrangements in the outside world?”

“I have.” Ning nodded.

“Mm.” The giant yellow bear nodded. “I can sense the turbulence in your heart. Your mind is currently in a state of chaos. First, go to the Stellar Hall and read some of the star maps within it. After reading a few books and calming yourself down, come and speak to me regarding your matters.”

Ning was startled. “Read in the Stellar Hall?”

“Go,” the giant yellow bear instructed.

“Yes, senior.” Ning didn’t disobey. He went straight to the Stellar Hall.

Within the Stellar Hall. Outside the thatched cottage.

Ning carried a book to the stone desk, then sat down, opened it up, and began to force himself to calm down and read. He had first killed Youngflame Nong, then separated with Ninelotus, and then arrange for the monsters of the Immortal estate to protect his clan. Whenever Ning thought about the impending arrival of the Youngflame clan, Ning’s mind would become filled with a myriad of random thoughts, causing him to feel extremely restless.

“Today, Chang came to pay his respects to me...” Ning’s voice

reverberated within this small pocket world. Every single word was extremely simple, but when joined together, they became filled with boundless magical power. In a very natural way, Ning began to calm down; in fact, he even began to slowly enter a state of attunement and meditation on the Dao.

Calm.

Relaxation.

The restlessness in Ning's heart faded away, and Ning raised his head to stare at the stars in the sky.

Suddenly...rain began to fall down from the skies, as fine as silk, sprinkling everywhere, including upon Ning himself.

Chapter 3: Mastering the First Dao-Path

The downpour steadily grew, and it poured down into this world. Ji Ning didn't move to avoid it, nor did he use his elemental ki to block it; he allowed the rain to cascade onto his body. He felt closer to the raindrops than he ever had before, so close that he felt intoxicated by them.

Suddenly...

A nameless aura began to envelope Ning. This was the aura of the Dao! Ning's entire body seemed to have become the Dao itself.

"The Dao of Rainwater?" The giant yellow bear and the old black bull were both completely stunned.

"He's actually mastered it. Although Ning has made major improvements in the ten years he spent at Serpentwing Lake, and had an extremely deep grasp regarding the Dao of Rainwater, he was still some distance away from mastering it. Generally speaking, when comprehending the Dao, the farther along the path you go, the more difficult it will become. What in the world has Ji Ning experienced? Whatever it was, it seems to have baptized him, allowing him to break through and completely understand the Dao of Rainwater at one go." The giant yellow bear sighed in amazement.

The old black bull nodded as well. . "Whatever it was he experienced, it had a tremendous impact on him."

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The rainwater vanished. Ning stared at the stars in the sky. He had advanced in the Dao of the Inferno, the Dao of the Gale, and the Dao of the Sword as well. His understanding of the Dao of the Sword in particular, which had reached the Grand Dao Domain, had further stabilized after this period of time of time in the Stellar Hall.

Finally, he came to a halt and rested.

"How much time did I spend in meditation?" Ning spoke out.

"Not too long, just an hour." The giant yellow bear laughed, "But in this

hour, you improved quite a bit; you surged forward tremendously in one breath.”

Ning felt more peaceful than he ever had before. He revealed a hint of a smile. “I can sense my improvement as well. I have thoroughly comprehended the Dao of Rainwater, and in fact, I have gained a certain degree of insight into all ‘water’-type Daos.”

“This is called resonance,” the giant yellow bear said. “You have now mastered the Dao-Path of Rainwater; naturally, you will continue to advance in the element of water. For the other, similar Daos to resonate is quite normal. Unfortunately, although you advanced a bit in the Dao of the Inferno and the Dao of the Gale, you are still a little ways off from completely mastering these Dao-Paths.”

Ning nodded.

Of his three Daos, he had gained insights into the Dao of Rainwater the earliest, and his level of comprehension with regards to this Dao was the highest. His insights into the Dao of the Inferno was secondary only to the Dao of Rainwater, and was actually quite close; however, he still had yet to completely master it. As for the Dao of the Gale, it was weaker than both the other two.

“I didn’t expect that you’d actually be able to master a Grand Dao Domain.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. “Sword Immortals are all skilled at offense; it’s clear that your strength has risen significantly after you reached the Grand Dao Domain. Now that you’ve also mastered the Dao-Path of Rainwater, you will be absolutely capable of fusing your Dao of Rainwater into your Dao of the Sword.”

The Dao of the Sword was a mechanistic Dao. One could infuse one’s insights in other areas into the Dao of the Sword and display it through the sword!

“Let me try.” Ning laughed, then struck out with a finger into a sword-stance.

Suddenly, rainwater appeared in the surrounding area. The rainwater sprinkled everywhere, but each drop of water carried an incomparably

amazing amount of power. The entire world seemed to have been frozen into place. An ordinary Wanxiang Adept probably wouldn't even be able to move right now. After completely mastering a Dao-Path, one would be able to summon the awesome presence of the Dao itself, causing the entire surrounding area to be under one's own control.

"Activate." Ning suddenly flicked his finger. Swish! A streak of watery sword-light sliced through the skies, leaving behind a scar in the air that lingered for quite some time without vanishing.

"A good technique; truly, a good sword technique," the giant yellow bear praised.

"It's not just good; even Loose Immortals are generally only at this level, and many aren't as good as you, Ji Ning," the old black bull called out in surprise.

Ning laughed. Generally speaking, Primal Daoists were at the Dao Domain level, while Loose Immortals were generally capable of mastering a complete Dao-Path.

Ning had not only mastered a completely Dao-Path, he had also reached the Grand Dao Domain level in the Dao of the Sword. It was even harder to reach the Grand Dao Domain level than mastering a complete Dao-Path. With the two amplifying each other...indeed, many Loose Immortals were inferior to Ning. However, that only referred to 'ordinary' Loose Immortals, not ones like the Loose Immortals of the Black-White College.

"I am now in control of a complete Dao-Path. According to the rules of the College, I can make my breakthrough to the Primal Daoist level," Ning said. "In addition, after having killed a young master of a major tribe, I've reaped quite a few rewards; I imagine I should now have enough liquefied elemental essence to make that breakthrough. Only, I'm still hesitating; should I make that breakthrough or not? I'd like to ask you two seniors to please advise me on what I should do next."

The old black bull had accompanied Immortal Juhua for a million years, and had a great deal of experience. Naturally, his vision would be very broad as well.

As for the giant yellow bear, he had followed Daoist Threelives and had unfathomable experiences.

Ning felt that he truly should ask the advice of these two.

“Speak,” The giant yellow bear said.

“What’s this? You killed a young master of a major clan? Tell, tell,” the old black bull said with great eagerness.

Ning nodded. “I was originally training in Brightheart Island on Serpentwing Lake, but a few days ago, a large warship suddenly appeared in the skies above it...” Ning began to describe his experience in detail, from start to finish. He even explained the backgrounds of Youngflame Nong and Ninelotus, so as to give these two old figures sufficient background information for pondering.

He even told them about Yu Wei’s advice and the upcoming Conclave of Immortal Destiny.

“The Youngflame clan is going to pursue me. What should I do?” Ning looked at the old black bull and the giant yellow bear.

“A major tribe that can rank amongst the top ten clans of one of the three thousand major worlds...this sort of tribe definitely has Celestial Immortals,” the giant yellow bear said. “In addition, they should have more than just one. A force like this...for the current you, they are indeed far too powerful. Fortunately, in the Grand Xia Dynasty, there are strict laws, which is why you still have a chance to resist them.”

“The Youngflame clan? I know this clan,” the old black bull said hurriedly. “In the past, Immortal Juhua had a bit of a relationship with the clan. The Youngflame clan does indeed rank towards the front amongst the clans of the Grand Xia Dynasty. However, although the imperial clan of the Grand Xia did indeed need these clans when it was unifying the world, after doing so, these clans became a threat to them.”

Ning was startled.

“In truth, the imperial clan of the Grand Xia has been working all this time to try and weaken the power of the clans,” the old black bull said

quickly. “They first built the commandery cities, spreading them throughout the world so as to increase their sphere of control, and then formed the Raindragon Guard and spread them throughout the world as well! In addition, they secretly foment internal struggles between these clans, tribes, and sects.”

“Can it be that the other tribes are idiots? They’ll just stupidly fight amongst each other like that?” Ning was curious.

“This is what you don’t understand. This isn’t a hidden scheme; it’s an open scheme. There is only so much land in this major world, and only so many treasures. And yet, there are so many tribes. What to do about it? The imperial clan of the Grand Xia will take their share, then leave the other major powers to fight over what’s left. If you aren’t willing to fight for your share, then your clan will end up with no treasures. Thus, they are forced to struggle against each other, and as they do, they naturally end up forming grudges.”

Ning nodded.

“However, the imperial clan of the Grand Xia wouldn’t dare to act directly against its marquises. That’s because if they were to act against one marquis, all of the other marquises would feel threatened; in fact, some actually might join forces to revolt!” The old black bull continued, “This is why the imperial clan of the Grand Xia has set down some laws, some public laws.”

“So long as you do not disobey the laws, the imperial clan absolutely won’t touch you.”

“But if you were to violate those laws? The imperial clan of the Grand Xia would be like sharks that smelled the scent of blood; they will eat you alive,” the old black bull laughed. “So long as you hide within a commandery city, the Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan definitely won’t dare to act against you, because once they do, then the imperial clan of the Grand Xia, which has always wanted to whittle away at the power of the marquises, will have an ironclad reason to act against them. They would quickly send out a squad to annihilate that Celestial

Immortal!”

“Now, do you understand some of the hidden undercurrents of this world of the Grand Xia Dynasty’s?” The old black bull looked at Ning.

Ning nodded.

The imperial clan of the Grand Xia, and the many marquises.

Many of the marquises held grudges against each other; no wonder Yu Wei had advised him to join a different marquisdom.

“That senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei of yours told you to go participate in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. Her words are quite correct,” the giant yellow bear said. “You are going to become a Celestial Immortal, and in fact, an Empyrean God...”

“Senior, what is an ‘Empyrean God’?” Ning immediately asked. Ning had never quite understood what Empyrean Gods were.

“When Earth Immortals, who are at the ‘Void’ level, overcome the Celestial Tribulation, they will naturally become carefree Celestial Immortals.”

“Void-level Fiendgods, however, when overcoming the Celestial Tribulation will become Empyrean Gods!” The giant yellow bear said, “To become an Empyrean God is tens of times, perhaps a hundred times, as difficult as becoming a Celestial Immortal.”

Ning was speechless. “A hundred times harder?”

It was rare for there to be even a single Celestial Immortal for every ten thousand Earth Immortals; to become an Empyrean God was even harder?!

“That’s because they have completely different levels of power,” the giant yellow bear explained. “Earlier, you said you encountered a Fiendgod, a Hydraga. He was only at the Primal level, but already comparable to a peak Loose Immortal.”

“Right.” Ning nodded.

“A Void-level Fiendgod is already comparable to a Celestial Immortal.

And an Empyrean God...they are absolutely comparable to True Immortals!" The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. "Now do you understand? Once you become an Empyrean God...you would become a true major power of the Three Realms. In fact, even if you were to go to the Deva realm and express a desire to join the Celestial Court, the Celestial Emperor would warmly welcome you and even let you command hundreds of thousands of celestial soldiers or generals."

Ning blinked. The Celestial Emperor of the Celestial Court would personally welcome him? Let him command hundreds of thousands of celestial soldiers?

"Master said that only after I become an Empyrean God would I truly be considered his apprentice." Ning couldn't help but say, "This requirement is a bit high for me."

"Think about what Master's status was. He emerged from the world alongside Pangu and Nuwa...he was one of the most supreme powers of the entire Three Realms. Only after reaching the Empyrean God level could it be said that you are not an embarrassment to him," the giant yellow bear said. "But don't change the subject. As I was saying earlier, the advice from your senior apprentice-sister, Yu Wei, to go to the Conclave of Immortal Destiny was very good advice. This is because, as the saying goes, it is better to travel ten thousand kilometers than to read ten thousand books...and it is better to make a single journey on the border between life and death than to travel ten thousand kilometers."

"The Conclave of Immortal Destiny will have all the geniuses of this entire major world present; in fact, some of the geniuses of other major worlds might come in secret as well, so as to take part."

"This is just like the cultivation of Gu-bugs. Put ten thousand venomous bugs in one place and have them fight against each other and devour each other. In the end, the venomous bugs that you have left will be incomparably powerful. The principle is the same; the ones to survive the Conclave of Immortal Destiny shall be truly extraordinary. This is an excellent chance for you to temper yourself, a chance which is quite rare and hard to find."

The giant yellow bear continued, “Right, you said you killed Youngflame Nong; didn’t you acquire a great deal of treasure from him? Take it out, take it all out and let me take a look and see which would be of use to you.”

Ning waved his hand. “He had many treasures. I just bound the storage-type magic treasure not long ago.” He had been hiding some of the treasures within his Zifu, while he had stored the others in his own storage-type magic treasure.

Whoosh.

Instantly, a small hill appeared on the ground, completely formed from precious items and magic treasures.

“These are the treasures and precious items of Youngflame Nong.” Ning pointed at them.

Chapter 4: Primaltwin

Ning waved his hand again, and another hill of items appeared as well, as well as some sacks. "These were left behind by that dead Fiendgod." The Hydra had once forced himself to train as a Ki Refiner as well. Unfortunately, natural Fiendgods were innately very weak as Ki Refiners. Only after many years of painstaking training had he reached the Zifu level; afterwards, Xiangliu Fang could no longer be bothered to train in this regard.

After reaching the Zifu level, he was able to use storage-type magic treasures, at least. This was enough to make Xiangliu Fang quite happy! In the Fiendgod Era, before he had trained as a Ki Refiner, he always had to carry around his treasures with him.

"There's quite a bit." The old black bull sighed in amazement.

"Let me take a look." The giant yellow bear swept his gaze across the magic treasures. Suddenly, the two treasure-hills all flew into the air, then stayed there.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.

These treasures quickly began to sort themselves out by type. Bottles and jars moved to one side, while Dao-seals and jade discs, as well as some other unique items were pulled to another. The many magic treasures were also placed on another side...

Ning simply watched as the levitating treasures sorted themselves out by type. "I didn't sense any ripples of power, but these treasures all levitated into the air; the powers of this spirit of the underwater estate truly are unfathomable."

"This is a spirit-pill; if you lose an arm or a leg, eat the pill, and it'll be healed. You are a Fiendgod Refiner; this is useless to you. Go back and sell it off or give it to a friend."

"This is a poison powder...it's hard to ascertain how powerful the poison is, but it should be decent."

“This bottle is marked with the words, ‘Drunken Immortal’s Pill’? Eh? Its intoxicating properties are quite strong; I imagine that even if Loose Immortals ate it, they would be intoxicated. Three pills in total.”

The giant yellow bear quickly went through the various jars and bottles. Soon, he pulled out two of the jade bottles from the masses. “These two bottles both contain liquefied elemental essence, roughly twenty five thousand kilograms each, for a total of fifty thousand kilograms. Youngflame Nong actually carried fifty thousand kilograms on him... that’s quite a bit.” Unless they were in desperate need, most Immortal cultivators wouldn’t carry that much with them. They would use them to buy magic treasures or just use them up. However, to Youngflame Nong, fifty thousand kilograms wasn’t that much.

“He must’ve been worried that he might gain a sudden insight while wandering the world, and so prepared them for a possible breakthrough to the Primal Daoist level,” Ning laughed. Fifty thousand kilograms; this was absolutely enough to break through to the Primal Daoist level.

“You cannot use it.” The giant yellow bear shook his head. “You are going to the Conclave of Immortal Destiny; you cannot breakthrough to become a Primal Daoist.”

Ning nodded. He understood this principle. This Conclave came only once every three centuries; there was no way he could wait another three hundred years. Thus, this was the only chance he would have to attend the Conclave. Sparring against so many other geniuses on the same level was an opportunity that would have long, far-ranging impacts on him. If one didn’t have a long-term plan and only focused on short-term gains, in the end, one would suffer for it.

“These curios aren’t bad either.”

“Oh? A Greater Teleportation Dao-seal? Youngflame Nong had a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal?” The giant yellow bear called out in surprise as he pointed with a finger. Instantly, a rune-covered leaf flew over.

Ning’s eyes lit up. “Greater Teleportation Dao-seal?”

He had previously acquired two protective items from the underwater estate; one was that black loop, while the other was, in fact, a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal.

One was meant for attack; the other was meant for defense and escaping.

Upon using a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal, the might within it would instantly activate and surround him in a barrier which even Loose Immortals wouldn't be able to break. And then, he would vanish and disappear. Even if the region was spacelocked, even if he was trapped in a place of no escape, he could still use a Greater Teleport to leave! He could even teleport from a different world directly to the world of the Grand Xia Dynasty!

"You now have two Greater Teleportation Dao-seals." The giant yellow bear flicked his finger, sending the leaf flying towards Ning. Laughing, Ning waved his hand and accepted it.

"Youngflame Nong truly was unfortunate to run into you. His soul was immediately ripped out, giving him no chance to even use the Greater Teleportation Dao-seal." The giant yellow bear continued to investigate. "There's quite a few protective treasures as well. There's a Vajra-Guard Skypearl, a Golden Skyfire seal, a Skyflee shuttle...still, these are quite inferior compared to a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal."

Youngflame Nong actually had three major treasures; the 'Lock' scroll, the black and white disc, and the Greater Teleportation Dao-seal. He had used up two of them. The plan had been to bind the Immortal estate, sell the monstrous Dao-soldiers of the estate to his clan, then use those resources to purchase some truly top-tier treasures. Unfortunately, he would never have the chance to do so.

"Big bro, take a look; isn't that the Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater?" The old black bull suddenly pointed to a watery pearl which hovered in the mass of precious items.

"A Sole-Ki Pearl of Elemental Water?" The giant yellow bear hurriedly looked over. His eyes lit up, and he began to laugh loudly. "Ning, you little

tyke, it seems it is indeed time for you to reach the Primal level. With this Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater, you can now cultivate a Primaltwin.”

Ning called out in surprise, “A Primaltwin?!”

Naturally, Ning knew what a Primaltwin was; virtually all cultivators knew what it was! In the Black-White College, the technique for forming a Primaltwin was something which every single disciple could learn. There was no need for using black-white pellets at all. It was something for everyone to know, but unfortunately, less than one in a thousand Primal Daoists would actually be able to refine a Primaltwin!

This was because...it was too hard to find the right vessel!

When a cultivator broke through from the Wanxiang stage to the Primal stage, the essence of the myriad manifestations of stars and the elemental sea within the Zifu region would crystallize and give birth to a Turtle-Snake 1. At the same time, the soul would descend from the sea of consciousness and sink deep into the Turtle-Snake.

When they fused into one...the Primal Turtle-Snake would be formed! With the Primal Turtle-Snake serving as a physical vessel, and the soul serving as the self, a Primal Daoist would arise from the fusion!

In order to refine a Primaltwin, one would need to find a physical vessel; once one found it, one would use a secret art to split one’s soul in two, keeping half the soul in the original body and placing the other half within the vessel and forming a Primaltwin.

“Right. This Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater is like a natural Zifu region,” the giant yellow bear laughed. “All you need to do is split out part of your soul and place it within the pearl, and you’ll be able to slowly refine it into a Primaltwin! In fact, in the future your Primaltwin would even be able to become an Earth Immortal and perhaps surpass the tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal.”

Ning had never even heard of a ‘Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater’; in the annals of the Black-White College regarding Primaltwins, the most famous vessel was the ‘Darkvalley Pearl’.

“How is it compared to the Darkvalley Pearl?” Ning asked.

“The Darkvalley Pearl is too mediocre,” the giant yellow bear said. “A Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater contains the essence of primal, elemental water. After you fuse your soul into it and form your Primaltwin, your body will be formed from the essence of primal water as well. By then, when you use it to train in water-type Daos, you will find it much simpler. It seems as though you are destined to travel very far in the element of water.”

The Dao of Rainwater was nothing more than an extremely unremarkable type of Dao that belonged to the element of water, one of the Five Elements.

“How is your soul? Is it capable of withstanding a Primaltwin secret art?” The giant yellow bear asked.

To divide a soul in half was extremely dangerous. The soul had to be sufficiently strong; if it wasn't, then dividing it in half was akin to suicide! Thus, generally speaking, only Primal Daoists who had been at that stage for a very long time or experts who had already reached the Void level and become Earth Immortals would be able to produce a Primaltwin!

“My divine sense stretches to a thousand kilometers,” Ning said.

“Mm. There are very few Primal Daoists who have souls comparable to yours; you can compare to a weak Loose Immortal.” The giant yellow bear nodded. “You can split your soul in half.”

Ning felt a fire begin to blaze in his heart. To produce a Primaltwin at the Wanxiang level; this was far too rare. First of all, the soul had to be strong enough; then, one had to have a vessel, such as the ‘Darkvalley Pearl’ or the ‘Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater’. Thus, for every thousand reincarnated Immortals, perhaps only one would be able to produce a Primaltwin at the Wanxiang stage.

The reason why only those below the Primal stage were allowed to participate in the contests of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny was to ensure fairness!

Although Ning might have refined a Primaltwin, his true body remained at the Wanxiang level. So long as it was only his true body which went to compete, and his Primaltwin stayed out of it...there would be no problems! Ning had already chatted previously with Yu Wei regarding the Conclave, and so he naturally knew about some of the rules of it.

Only geniuses amongst geniuses would be capable of producing Primaltwins at the Wanxiang level; naturally, they wouldn't be barred from participating in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. However, they would only be allowed to use their true bodies to compete; in fact, their Primaltwins wouldn't even be permitted to enter the competition grounds!

"Eh?" The giant yellow bear frowned.

"What is it?" Ning asked.

"A Celestial Immortal has come to Serpentwing Lake," the giant yellow bear said.

"Celestial Immortal?" Ning was shocked. "It must be the Youngflame clan!"

"Don't worry. I can discover him, but he can't discover me." The giant yellow bear said calmly, "Master spent unfathomable amounts of blood, sweat, and effort in order to forge me. There is no one in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty capable of discovering me."

In the air above Serpentwing Lake.

It was already dark. Nine Flood Dragons, pulling an Immortal carriage behind them, had appeared in the skies. Aboard the Immortal carriage sat Patriarch Arcanum, with the Godplume Duke attending to him by the side.

"This is the place where Ji Ning is permanently stationed?" Patriarch Arcanum, with but a single thought, was able to scan this entire region. Brightheart Island was now completely empty; not a single person was present. However, there were still a few people on boats who were sailing aboard Serpentwing Lake. These were ordinary mortals. Given how large Serpentwing Lake was, it would take them a tremendous amount of time

to pass through it.

“They fled?” A baleful look appeared in Patriarch Arcanum’s eyes. “Kill those mortals.”

“Kill them?” The Godplume Duke hesitated.

The Dao of the Heavens was protective of mortals. For Immortal cultivators to kill mortals was a grave sin. Even someone like Patriarch Arcanum, who wanted to kill these mortals, wasn’t willing to personally kill them and cause sin to surround him. Even Celestial Immortals would see their luck plummet, and as their luck plummeted...they would run into all sorts of trouble. If Celestial Immortals had sufficiently bad luck, they might end up dying in battle.

“Why aren’t you acting yet?” Patriarch Arcanum gave the Godplume Duke a sidelong glance.

“Alright.” The Godplume Duke gritted his teeth, then looked at the nine Flood Dragons pulling the Immortal carriage. He sent a spirit-message: “Kill the mortals.”

Although none of the nine Flood Dragons wanted to obey, they still all opened their mouths.

Whoooooosh.

Nine streaks of fire descended, instantly sweeping through the entire lake. The commoners on the lake’s surface were all shocked and terrified for a moment...and then they transformed into ash. Tendrils of sin instantly descended, with some swirling around the bodies of those nine Flood Dragons, and the rest swirling around the Godplume Duke. A very small amount of sin ended up swirling around Patriarch Arcanum as well.

“Let’s go to the City of Ten Thousand Swords.” Patriarch Arcanum gave the order, and the nine Flood Dragons pulled the Immortal carriage away, quickly arriving at the City of Ten Thousand Swords, just a few thousand kilometers away.

The City of Ten Thousand Swords remained as it always had been.

Patriarch Arcanum did a quick inspection. His face immediately changed. “There are this many monstrous Dao-soldiers here? Hrm? Ji Ning’s master, that Sword Immortal known as Diancai, he is here as well?”

“Hmph.” Patriarch Arcanum’s temper was volatile, but he knew that there was nothing he could do to this city. He immediately ordered coldly, “Fujun, arrange for the City of Ten Thousand Swords, Western Prefecture City and Serpentwing Lake be under constant watch! This is the homeland of Ji Ning’s clan; I refuse to believe he will never return. Also, ask the Heavenly Treasures Mountain to keep a close watch on Ji Ning. Upon discovering his whereabouts, immediately inform our Youngflame clan. No matter where he is hiding, once we discover him, immediately send people to kill him.”

“Yes,” the Godplume Duke said respectfully.

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1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Tortoise#/media/File:Wudangshu_Xuanwu-in-Beijing-Capital-Museum-3796.jpg

Chapter 5: Immortal Diancai and Ji Ning

“Let’s go. We return to the imperial capital!” Patriarch Arcanum gave the order. Immediately, those nine Flood Dragons pulled the Immortal carriage away, disappearing into the skies.

Patriarch Arcanum was a decisive individual. He knew that given that he hadn’t discovered Ji Ning right away, if he wanted to capture Ning...he would have to spend quite a bit of time. Although he was a Celestial Immortal, he wasn’t omniscient; he still had to resort to using the power of the tribe and the Heavenly Treasures Mountain to find Ning.

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Within the City of Ten Thousand Swords.

Immortal Diancai lifted his head, watching as Patriarch Arcanum departed. By his side were Ji Truekeep, Ji Ninfire, and the other members of the Ji clan, along with the two monstrous Loose Immortals.

“Clan leader Ji,” Immortal Diancai said, “Patriarch Arcanum has already departed. He wasn’t able to find my apprentice, but he won’t stay here indefinitely; he’s a Celestial Immortal, after all, with an exalted status! However, I imagine he will arrange for some people to stay on watch, here at Swallow Mountain. This is my apprentice’s homeland, after all; they will definitely keep an eye on it. Now that your Ji clan has so many monstrous Dao-soldiers present...there’s no reason for me to stay here. I won’t tarry any longer, then.”

“Thank you, senior Immortal,” Truekeep and the others said hurriedly.

They felt tremendous gratitude for this Immortal of the Black-White College, who had hurried here at such a critical time. Although he was Ning’s master, when trouble came, some masters would flee even faster than their disciples would.

Immortal Diancai didn’t say anything else. He soared straight into the skies. The City of Ten Thousand Swords had already set down a grand spacelock formation, preventing teleportation.

Whoosh. After flying high into the sky, Immortal Diancai immediately disappeared.

“This Immortal Diancai truly is a loyal man,” the monstrous Immortal Duohe said with a sigh.

“Admirable, admirable,” Immortal Witchsui said as well.

“It’s true. For Ning to have such a master is his good fortune,” Ninefire sighed.

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Stillwater City. The Black-White College.

The black-robed, black-haired Immortal Diancai was seated face to face with a short old man. Before the two of them, there was only a flagon of Immortal wine.

“Senior apprentice-brother Fivecraze,” Immortal Diancai said softly, “The arrival of Patriarch Arcanum caused me to feel powerless. Ning is my apprentice, my one and only disciple...but I’m not able to do anything in the face of the Youngflame clan’s attempt to kill him! I’m completely unable to save him!” As he spoke, Diancai’s body was visibly trembling.

“Junior apprentice-brother Diancai,” the short elder said hurriedly, “Don’t be so stubborn. He’s a Celestial Immortal, after all.”

“So what if he is? In the past, wasn’t senior Northwalker, a Loose Immortal, comparable to a Celestial Immortal in might?” Immortal Diancai growled, “I’ve made up my mind. Today, I am going to leave. Leave this major world of ours, and temper myself through adventuring. Although I reached the peak of the Void stage long ago and although I can attempt my tribulation, I’ve been suppressing myself, precisely because I don’t feel confident in succeeding. My talent is a bit weaker than this disciple of mine’s. If I don’t frantically temper myself, most likely, in the end, I won’t be able to avoid being overcome by the Celestial Tribulation and becoming a Loose Immortal. After becoming a Loose Immortal...even if I stay alive countless eons and reach senior Northwalker’s level of power, what’s the point? In the end, I still won’t be

able to overcome the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations, resulting in death.”

The short elder was silent for a moment, then said slowly, “It seems your apprentice’s matter has affected you tremendously.”

“I, his master, have failed him. I am of no use!” Immortal Diancai rose to his feet. “I’ll leave now, senior apprentice-brother.”

“Be careful!” The short elder said solemnly.

To temper one’s self naturally required one to experience deadly situations, to walk on the border between life and death, which would allow one’s insights and comprehension to rapidly increase. However, this sort of tempering was extremely dangerous. When walking on a line between life and death, one might truly fall into death.

Immortal Diancai laughed, then charged into the skies, quickly disappearing.

Swish. Swish. Swish. Swish. Swish.

Five figures appeared in succession by the short elder’s side. These were the other Immortals of the Black-White College.

“He truly is decisive,” a youthful-looking ‘child’ sighed.

“Compared to him...” The tall, muscular, chain-shrouded man said in a low voice, “Although I am a reincarnated Immortal, my Dao-heart isn’t as firm as his. It seems the common saying is true; if you fail in one life to become a Celestial Immortal, even if you reincarnated ten times or a hundred times, you still won’t be able to become a Celestial Immortal.”

“There are still some reincarnated Immortals who do become Celestial Immortals,” the short elder said.

“But how few and rare are they?” The youthful-looking child sighed. “With the great determination that junior apprentice-brother Diancai has...as I see it, he might have just increased his chances of becoming a Celestial Immortal by a bit. He may very well truly have a shot at becoming only the second Celestial Immortal the Black-White College

has seen in our ancient history.”

“He does indeed have a shot,” the tall, blood-robed, skinny youth said with a nod. “However...the Celestial Tribulation is difficult to overcome!”

All of them fell silent. The Celestial Tribulation? This was a nightmare for all Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals. The worst part of it was, every single Celestial Tribulation was different in power; just because one was strong, didn’t mean they would necessarily succeed in overcoming it!

“First, junior apprentice-brother Diancai needs to return safely. Otherwise, there’s no point in discussing the Celestial Tribulation.” The short elder’s eyes were filled with anticipation. “I wonder if I, a crazy old madman, will be able to see him again before I die.”

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Within another world. The underwater estate.

Ning had no idea as to what had happened in the outside world. His attention was completely focused on the Primaltwin secret art; this was a soul-splitting technique, and he had to be incredibly cautious in using it.

Ning was seated in the lotus position on a prayer mat. Not too far away, the giant yellow bear and the old black bull were staring at him.

“He won’t fail, will he?” The old black bull said worriedly. They had already set up a barrier around them, preventing their voices from reaching out and disturbing Ning.

“Ji Ning’s Visualization Technique is an extremely impressive one. Even if he fails, he would at most lose control over half of his soul; he wouldn’t die,” the giant yellow bear said.

“Lose control over half his soul...” The old black bull murmured to himself. That was still quite severe.

If the Primaltwin art was a success, the soul would be split in two, but both parts would still remain in existence. Although Ning would temporarily be weakened, that would be a minor matter, and he would soon recover. If, however, one of the two parts of his soul was to be

completely extinguished, Ning's personality might change drastically. He might even develop mental issues such as depression or madness.

To lose control over half of one's soul...this could indeed cause a drastic personality change.

Huff. Puff. Ning took several long breaths, completely calm. He had already memorized and mentally repeated the Primaltwin art several times now.

"Let's begin."

Ning shut his eyes.

Within his sea of consciousness. The spirit-Ning stood there, entire body emanating with sword-ki. This was an evolved sword-soul! Sword-souls were almost utterly indestructible, making a split even more difficult.

Whooooooooosh. The forehead of the spirit-Ning began to glow with light, a vertical-shaped light. Ning used all of his energy in executing the secret art, causing his own divine will to form into a knife that began to cut both upwards and downwards from his forehead.

That vertical light slowly began to elongate.

"Arggggggh!" Agony. The soul-ripping agony caused even Ning, despite his incredible endurance and Dao-heart, to tremble. However, generally speaking, those who dared to execute the Primaltwin technique were all extraordinary figures who would be able to endure this level of pain.

The vertical light continued to elongate. It reached his neck...his chest...his abdomen...

The vertical light splitting the 'body' of the spirit-Ning had completely cut him in half. It was as though a ray of light had just cleanly bisected him. However, this wasn't the dangerous part; what was going to happen next was the dangerous part.

"SPLIT!"

Ning's soul began to split apart. That vertical light splitting his spirit in

half separated, causing his spirit to split into two parts. One half, moving as fast as lightning, flew back into Ning's physical body. In the instant his soul split apart, Ning felt a wave of dizziness overcome him, and while flying over his soul trembled as well. Ning's Dao-heart, however, was resilient, and so although the dizziness caused him to feel incredibly tired, he was still able to withstand it.

This was a step that had to be fast and had to be endured. Otherwise, if the other half of the soul wasn't able to enter the Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater, it would die on the way. After splitting the soul, there was no way to merge it again.

"Enter."

The other half of the soul flew out like a streak of light, entering the Sole-Ki Pearl.

In the instant it did, the soul felt as though it was a son entering the embrace of the other, a wandering, adrift boat that had finally returned to harbor. There was a feeling of peace, of warmth, of calm which completely filled the soul. The soul had its vessel...naturally, it felt nice.

"Whew." Ning let out a sigh of relief.

"Visualization Technique!"

For the moment, Ning had no time to waste on training his Primaltwin. His very first response was to immediately have both of his souls immediately execute the Visualization Technique.

Within his sea of consciousness.

The now-shrunk spirit-Ning sat down in the lotus position. Ahead of him, within the vast void of his sea of consciousness, appeared an enormous image of Maiden Nuwa. The image of Maiden Nuwa, in the void, seemed to press down upon both the past and the future. It was eternal and unchanging, and it caused Ning's soul to become incomparably stable as well. The aura of divine light emanating from her, filled with boundless warmth, illuminated Ning's soul, causing the badly damaged soul to begin to heal.

Within the Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater, there was the second, also-shrunken spirit-Ning, who was also visualizing an image of Maiden Nuwa. When her image appeared, her light seemed to stretch off into infinity.

Both souls were in a wounded state right now, but they rapidly began to heal. This healing process took nearly three full days, during the course of which both souls grew considerably stronger.

“Whew.” Ning opened his eyes. The Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater in front of him flew up as well, landing within his hand.

“How did it go?” The giant yellow bear asked hurriedly, “How is your soul?”

“I’ve healed to roughly seventy percent of normal,” Ning said.

“Seventy percent?!” The giant yellow bear was stunned. “It seems you truly do have a formidable Visualization Technique.”

When the soul split into two, both souls would have roughly half of the strength of the former soul. For an ordinary visualization technique, the user would be lucky to see each half-soul stabilize at fifty percent power. You could forget about having the soul quickly grow back! But Ning had not only stabilized his souls, he had already reached seventy percent power.

“However, this is a one-time thing. After all, the damage caused by the soul-splitting was fresh, which was why I was able to heal so much of it at one go. In the future, it will be slower. To return to a divine sense of a thousand kilometers...I’m afraid it will take a long time,” Ning sighed.

“Don’t be too greedy. You’ve already produced a Primaltwin, after all; this represents a second life for you,” the giant yellow bear sighed. “Your Primaltwin can also become an Earth Immortal or Celestial Immortal; in fact, if your true body dies, your Primaltwin will still survive.”

Laughing, Ning nodded.

The true body and the Primaltwin had linked memories; in all other ways, however, they were completely independent. Indeed, a Primaltwin

could be described as a second life.

“Hurry up and begin your training. Completely refine all of the essence within the Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater,” the giant yellow bear laughed.

“Right.” Ning nodded, then had his Primaltwin within the Sole-Ki Pearl begin to train.

Chapter 6: Primal Breakthrough

The Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater was a naturally occurring spirit-treasure that was one of the most superb resources for nourishing the soul.

There were some Immortal cultivators who, believing their Zifu's to be damaged, would steal the bodies of others. This sort of possession, however...had a major problem. It was that the affinity between the body and the soul would be very weak. Generally speaking, most bodies were not of very high quality. Some Immortal cultivators, upon finding a good body, would seize it. Once their affinity with it reached a certain level, they would be extremely satisfied.

However, the likes of the Darkvalley Pearl, the Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater, and other such naturally occurring spirit-treasures were truly perfect vessels. Because they had never been inhabited by a soul, once a soul did enter them, they would merge together perfectly. In terms of quality, as naturally occurring spirit-treasures, they were of course of superb quality.

"It was lucky for me that Youngflame Nong had procured this. If I were to search for it on my own, where the hell would I even start?" Ji Ning had begun his refining process, and as he did, he instantly realized how wonderful this pearl was. He couldn't help but sigh to himself, "Youngflame Nong must have prepared this for himself. However, in the end, his efforts ended up being for my sake."

Sole-Ki Pearls of Primalwater were filled with elemental essence to begin with; there was thus no need to absorb elemental ki from the surrounding world. One only needed to refine the ki within it. Ning was currently rising in power at a rapid rate.

BOOM!

A world suddenly came into being within the pearl. A Zifu region was born, and large amounts of elemental water essence began to transform, causing the Zifu region to expand in size.

Stars. The Moon. The Golden Crown. Three major Manifestations appeared...and the body immediately broke through to the Wanxiang level.

“This sort of ‘training’ truly is wonderful.” The old black bull, watching, couldn’t help but sigh in amazement, “What tremendous speed.”

“It’s just like when a reincarnated Immortal regains his memories. He already had the sufficient insights and a strong enough Dao-heart. Given that the Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater has condensed water elemental essence within it to begin with, it wouldn’t even surprise me if he trained all the way to the Primal stage,” the giant yellow bear said. These sorts of treasures, which contained elemental essence within them, would generally allow those who used them to reach the Primal stage. One couldn’t help but sigh at how marvelous the treasures of the natural world could be.

“He’s about to make a breakthrough,” the old black bull suddenly said.

After just an hour, the Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater had risen in power from the Xiantian level to the peak of the Wanxiang level. It was currently moving towards the Primal level.

Within the pearl. There was a vast, empty void here. The Zifu Lake was almost infinitely vast, and within the sky of this world, thousands of stars, a Jade Rabbit, and a Golden Crow hung in the sky. The aura of this place was even more powerful than the aura of Ning’s true body. This was because this body had truly reached the absolute peak of the peak Wanxiang stage!

“Arise!”

Ning’s soul was above the thousands of stars, at the very heart of the void in his Zifu region. He willed it...and instantly, the sea of elemental energy in his Zifu began to frantically condense into trillions of specks of purified light that wildly soared into the skies, towards those stars, the moon, and the sun, all of which were beginning to move in accordance with a secret rhythm. In the instant in which they all merged into the heavenly bodies, the stars, the Jade Rabbit, and the Golden Crow, all of

which had already reached their limit long ago, suddenly transformed into pillars of light that shot downwards.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Tens of thousands of pillars of light, some thin, some thick. The pillars of light created from the countless stars appeared very thin, while the pillars of light from the Golden Crow and the Moon Rabbit were clearly far thicker.

The countless pillars of light all focused on the central part of the Zifu, beginning to slowly form into an enormous creature.

The enormous creature was beginning to take shape. The light from the Golden Crow was focusing on its head, forming a tortoise-like beast. The light from the Jade Rabbit was beginning to focus on the other side, forming a serpent's head. The countless beams of light from the stars were beginning to form the body of the creature. The massive thing began to take clearer and clearer form; it was a mutant beast that looked like a turtle with a snake intertwined within it.

This was a legendary creature; the Turtle-Snake!

Any living creature, upon breaking through to the Primal level, would form a Primal Turtle-Snake.

Rumble....

In that instant, the enormous Turtle-Snake suddenly seemed to move. It actually began to crawl downwards, through the void, until it reached the elemental sea. Within that vast elemental sea of energy, the enormous, island-like Turtle-Snake began to slowly swim about.

"The Turtle-Snake has been formed. Let the Primal soul descend!"

Instantly, Ning's soul, which had remained hovering in the sky this entire time, descended directly into the enormous Turtle-Snake. As it entered the creature's body, it felt an incomparably comfortable sensation. It was as though the body of the Turtle-Snake was innately nurturing to souls; Ning could even feel his own soul begin to strengthen at an alarming speed.

“What a shocking speed of advancement. The rate at which my soul is strengthening is even faster than the rate at which it was healing when I visualized the image of Maiden Nuwa.” Ning sighed in absolute amazement. He finally understood why it was that although many Immortal cultivators had fairly weak souls at the Wanxiang stage, upon reaching the Primal stage, they would all quickly come to possess divine sense.

It was precisely because, within the Primal Turtle-Snake, the soul would strengthen at an astonishing rate! It was like grass being sown into mud, then quickly growing out of it.

Rumble...

The Turtle-Snake swiveled there. Yin and Yang intersected on the back of the Turtle-Snake, which is to say, it's shell. Suddenly, a golden flame emerged, blazing with incomparable heat and yet not harming the Primal Turtle-Snake in the slightest. This was the 'Primal Fire' which every single Primal Daoist was capable of using.

Whooooooooosh. The enormous Turtle-Snake swam about happily in the vast sea of elemental ki. The eyes of both the turtle-head and the snake-head both seemed extremely lively and clever, as though they were true living creatures.

As for the thousands of stars, the Golden Crow, and the Jade Rabbit, they continued to send down their condensed elemental essence. Bathed by it, the Turtle-Snake was still continuing to slowly grow.

After another long period of time, the stars, the Golden Crow, and the Jade Rabbit finally stopped sending down essence.

“The early Primal stage!” The giant Primal Turtle-Snake spoke out in the human tongue. “The energy within the Sole-Ki Pearl of Primalwater truly is remarkable. It was only used up after I trained all the way to the early Primal stage, then solidified my base.”

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In the instant he had become a Primal Daoist, there had actually also

been a sudden change in the surrounding elemental ki aura of the underwater estate. In addition, the ancient, eternal aura of the Dao itself had also descended.

“He made the breakthrough.” The giant yellow bear and the old black bull both laughed. Very soon, mist suddenly began to emerge from the pearl, which had been hovering in midair...and then the mist solidified into a black-robed Ji Ning.

“Greetings, seniors,” the black-robed Ji Ning laughed.

“Take a look at your original body,” the giant yellow bear said with a smirk.

The black-robed Ning turned his head. The original Ning turned his head as well. Their gazes intersected.

“Hahaha...” The two both laughed.

Actually, their memories were linked; it was as though one was the left hand, while the other was the right hand. As they exchanged glances, their thoughts were identical; this was, indeed, an extremely marvelous feeling.

“Greetings, fellow Daoist,” the black-robed Ning said..

“Greetings, fellow Daoist,” the other Ning also said.

And then, both laughed. With identical memories and thoughts, saying ‘greetings, fellow Daoist’ to each other was like mumbling to himself. It was nothing more than a joke.

“How does it feel?” The giant yellow bear asked.

“Very good,” the black-robed Ning nodded. “Breaking through to the Primal level feels very different. The soul fused with the Primal Turtle-Dragon, which felt incomparably comfortable. It is also advancing very rapidly.”

“Right. Generally speaking, upon breaking through to the Primal level, the rate of advancement for the soul will be very fast for a period of time. Afterwards, it will slow down, and in fact the soul might advance very

little even after a century passes,” the giant yellow bear said.

The black-robed Ning nodded. “Although the Primal Turtle-Snake is of tremendous help to the soul, everything has a limit. If the soul were to continue to rise at this rate perpetually, that would be ridiculous!”

“Let me first try the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] with this Primaltwin and see how it is.” The black-robed Ning willed it, and suddenly, a dense cluster of more than seven hundred flying swords appeared. Nine were the Nethercold swords, while 360 were high grade fire-attribute Earth-ranked flying swords, and another 360 were high grade water-attribute Earth-ranked flying swords.

He had picked these flying swords out from the vast ocean of magic treasures left behind by Immortal Witchriver in the estate. Ning had procured more than sixteen thousand magic treasures. With flying swords being one of the most common types of magic treasures, it hadn’t been too hard for him to find some that were suited to him.

“[Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!”

The black-robed Ning willed the formation to immediately activated. Previously, when activating the formation, Ning had always used the Nethercold swords first, then led the other 720 Mortal-ranked flying swords with them! Now, however, with all 720 Mortal-ranked flying swords having been changed into Earth-ranked flying swords, the difficulty of controlling the swords instantly increased more than a hundredfold. After all, he had upgraded far too many swords.

“Eh?!” The black-robed Ning frowned.

“How is it?” The old black bull laughed.

“I wanted to activate the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], but I’m unable to.” The black-robed Ning shook his head, then began to lower the level. The eighth level? The seventh level?

Whoosh!

Finally, he successfully activated the technique. More than five hundred flying swords swiveled about Ning, beginning to levitate up and down.

Ning's Primal-level elemental ki filled them, and his soul commanded them. Before his chest solidified an incomparably brilliant flying sword, which was even covered with a layer of prismatic white light.

"The seventh level [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]." The black-robed Ning shook his head. "I broke through to the Primal level, and my elemental ki has increased in power dramatically. However, my soul is still somewhat weaker than it was, before it split in two. Even though I've gained much enlightenment regarding the Dao...I'm still unable to go past the seventh level."

"These are, after all, all Earth-ranked magic treasures, and most are high grade. Even the seventh level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] is still more powerful than the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] with those Mortal-ranked flying sword," the giant yellow bear said.

The black-robed Ning nodded in agreement.

"Right. Just now, I took a look at your other treasures," the giant yellow bear said, pointing towards the other magic treasures, all separated by type. "Some of the sacks have quite a few golems in them."

The black-robed Ning nodded. "These are the golems that we discovered in the Witchriver Immortal Estate. That Fiendgod collected them."

"Let me help you retrofit these golems. Otherwise, they won't listen to your commands," the giant yellow bear said. "Right; don't you have fifty thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence? Hurry up and refine it all. You are only at the early Primal level, right? Raise your power a bit more. That way, your elemental ki will grow more pure, and it will be easier for you to control your magic treasures. By then, I imagine you'll be able to control the eighth, or even the ninth, level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]."

The black-robed Ning nodded. "Right." There was no reason not to use them up; it was best to use the liquid to improve his own power. Fifty thousand kilograms? This was more than enough to allow his Primaltwin to once more improve its power dramatically.

“In the future, I need to focus on the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation],” the black-robed Ning mused to himself. Although he had read many secret manuals, amongst those that were meant for Ki Refiners, the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] remained the best suited for him, and the most powerful one as well. His Primaltwin was a Ki Refiner; there was no way it could train in divine abilities, and so it naturally would have to focus on the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

It was destined that his Primaltwin would become an extremely powerful ki-refining Sword Immortal!

Chapter 7: Binding the Underwater Estate

Within the quiet hall. The black-robed Ning sat in the lotus position, a jade bottle in front of him. The liquefied elemental essence within it was continuously flowing into Ning's mouth.

"Heh heh heh." The old black bull watched, quite excited. He had been alone for far, far too long.

As for the giant yellow bear, he waved a paw and two giant sacks opened up. The golems within all flew out, howling through the air. A total of thirty six Qiongqi Manticore Golems, along with a black-armored male golem, emerged. As they flew out, they began to frantically struggle, trying to fight back.

"Be good and be obedient," the giant yellow bear chuckled merrily. The thirty six Qiongqi golems and the black-armored man all hung there in midair. Although they were struggling, there were unable to move at all, causing them to all reveal looks of amazement.

"Who are you?" The black-armored man stared at the giant yellow bear, then shouted, "Why are you confining us?"

"Oh, you actually have a soul planted inside you?" The giant yellow bear then shook his head. "Who made these golems? He was so rough and clumsy."

Clatter clatter clatter...

The thirty six Qiongqi golems and the black-armored man all suddenly separated into tens of thousands of component parts.

"Let me first collect the parts. I'll slowly reconfigure them." The giant yellow bear had a look of anticipation in his eyes. He waved a paw, and whoosh, all of the tens of thousands of parts disappeared, having been teleported away.

"Ji Ning, kid," the giant yellow bear said. "I'm going to go analyze these golems and wipe out some of the seals the former controller placed on them. After fixing them up, I'll return them to you."

“No rush,” Ning laughed. Ning himself wasn’t training; it was currently the Primaltwin, the ‘black-robed Ji Ning’, who was training.

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Time slowly passed on. Finally, all of the fifty thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence in the jade bottle had been used up. The black-robed Ning opened his eyes, revealing a look of joy in them.

“Ji Ning, how is it?” The old black bull asked eagerly.

“Just as I used up the liquefied elemental essence, I finally reached the late Primal stage,” the black-robed Ning said. “Let me test the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] first.”

Swish. Once again, more than seven hundred flying swords appeared. The Earth-ranked flyinig swords, led by the Nethercold Sword Formation, all flew into the air. However, even after trying his hardest for a long period of time, Ning was still unable to control them well, and was only able to execute the eighth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. “My elemental ki is far more pure than it was before, but I’m still only able to use the eighth level?”

“Ji Ning, you’ve already reached the Primal level with your Primaltwin. By using it, you can go and bind this underwater estate now,” the giant yellow bear said.

“Bind the estate?” Ning willed it, and suddenly, the Primaltwin transformed into a pearl that flew into Ning’s clothes.

“Come with me.” The giant yellow bear walked forward.

Ning felt tremendous anticipation. He had waited for this day for a very, very long time. When he had become a Zifu Disciple, he had only been able to bind a talisman; now, after having created his Primaltwin, he was finally going to be able to bind the underwater estate. Afterwards, he would be able to carry it around with him, just like Immortal Juhua had.

He followed the giant yellow bear through a wide, spacious corridor that he previously hadn’t been given access to at all.

“From now on, you will be granted access into 90% of the areas of the underwater estate,” the giant yellow bear said. “After binding the underwater estate, you’ll be able to carry it with you.”

“90%? Senior, are you saying that there are still areas which I cannot enter?” Ning asked.

“Right. For example, the Divine Abilities Hall; you cannot enter it. There are some other regions as well.” The giant yellow bear gave Ning a glance. “I imagine that you have already guessed...that at the Primal stage, you are only able to do a very basic binding of the estate, allowing you to carry it with you. To truly master all of its mysteries, you will need to wait until the day you become an Empyrean God and truly become Master’s disciple.”

Ning nodded. He had expected this all along. Earlier, he had watched as the giant yellow bear had effortlessly paralyzed in midair and rendered immobile the black-armored male golem, which was comparable to a peak Loose Immortal. In addition, Ning could sense the ancient aura of eternity emanating from the giant yellow bear, an aura that was even more heart-shaking than the aura which emanated from the Fiendgod he had encountered in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains. To completely master the underwater estate as a Primal Daoist? Even Ning himself felt that he was far from being able to do so.

“Empyrean God?” Ning murmured to himself, “Daoist Threelives, what in the world did you leave behind, that I have to become an Empyrean God before receiving it?”

They walked through the corridor and thorough various passages. Soon, they arrived at an ancient, simple room. Ning walked in, immediately feeling as though his heart was more peaceful than it ever had been before.

“This is the Still Room. In the past, Master personally set down a Buddhist formation, the ‘Grand Bodhi Stillheart Formation’, in this place. Amongst all the mind-calming formations known throughout the Three Realms, this formation ranks close to the top. Its name is ordinary, but its

power is extraordinary.” The giant yellow bear pointed at the giant, vast room with a claw. Instantly, an incomparably complicated golden formation appeared on the walls. Ning felt dizzy just looking at it. “This formation isn’t something you can try to comprehend yet. One glance is enough; don’t stare at it.”

The complicated golden formation covering the four walls of the place once more dimmed.

“Look.” The giant yellow bear pointed at the center of the Still Room. There was a platform there, atop which was an ordinary-looking, inky jade bed which emanated a frigid aura. “This is made from netherwater jade, retrieved from the deepest depths of the Nine Hells. It is extremely cold. When you first sit atop it, you feel feel extremely cold, but soon afterwards, you will feel very comfortable, and also feel it help to calm your heart. This jade bed alone is comparable in value to a Pure Yang magic treasure.”

Ning’s heart clenched, hard. A Pure Yang magic treasure? Daoist Threelives truly was wealthy and generous.

“However, don’t even think about selling it. This is already part of the underwater estate; there’s no way for you to pull it off.” The corners of the giant yellow bear’s mouth twitched upwards, a hint of smug amusement visible. “Haha, enough joking. The Still Room is the center of the entire underwater estate. All you need to do is bind it, and you’ll have a basic control over the underwater estate. Go ahead and start the binding process.”

Ning nodded, walking straight towards the inky jade bed.

Upon sitting atop it, he did indeed feel a heart-penetrating chill instantly fill his entire body. Even his soul seemed to have been frozen solid, but immediately afterwards, he felt calmer than he ever had before.

A void-soul! His soul was in a state of complete transcendence. Ning began to carefully go through and dissect every single thing which had happened to him recently. This sort of reflection and contemplation of one’s memories caused Ning’s Dao-heart to slowly strengthen even

further.

“This is incredible. The Buddhist formation, ‘Bodhi Stillheart Formation’, and the netherwater jade truly are extraordinary.” Ning hesitated no longer. With but a thought, he unleashed the black-robed Ning, who also sat down atop the netherwater jade, then began to use his powerful elemental ki to fill the Still Room and bind it to him.

The Still Room was slowly becoming bound. Time flowed on...

This binding process took six full days! And this was only the first, most elementary binding possible for the underwater estate.

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“What a truly marvelous feeling.” It felt as though every part of the entire underwater estate was under his control, but the strange thing was, although he felt as though he was in complete control, the Divine Abilities Hall seemed to have vanished, as though it didn’t exist.

“Weird.” Ning returned to the main hall. Within the main hall, the giant yellow bear and the old black bull were both present.

“Senior, did you forget about something?” Ning asked.

“What is it?” The giant yellow bear looked towards Ning.

“The treasures which Immortal Juhua left behind.” Ning couldn’t help but say, “I’ve already bound the underwater estate...where are his treasures?” The treasures of Immortal Juhua, the disassembled golems... although Ning could sense the entire estate, he couldn’t find any trace of those things. And, right now, Ning didn’t feel any sense of control over the giant yellow bear either.

“Oh, I almost forgot.” The giant yellow bear waved a hand.

Whoosh! Instantly, a mountain of magic treasures appeared within the hall. It truly was a mountain! A treasure mountain that was hundreds on hundreds of meters in height. Ning’s eyes instantly lit up upon seeing it.

“After living for a few million years, he really did accumulate quite a bit of treasure.” The giant yellow bear shook his head. “Immortal Juhua left

behind a total of three Immortal-ranked magic treasures, and each one of them could be considered high grade for Immortal-ranked treasures.”

Ning’s eyes instantly began to shine. Three? And all high grade?

Immortal Juhua really lived up to his reputation as a Loose Immortal who had lived for millions of years, a figure even more powerful than Immortal Northwalker. Most likely, even the Immortal artifacts owned by actual Celestial Immortals were only on par with his at best.

“Still, only one is left,” the giant yellow bear continued, pointing towards the old black bull. “Him.”

“Just one?!” Ning was flabbergasted. “Didn’t you say there were three? Immortal Juhua left three behind, right? The fourth master of the estate died at the Wanxiang level; there’s no way he could’ve taken away the Immortal-ranked magic treasures. Where’d the other two go?”

Was this a joke? Two high grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures had just ‘gone missing’?!

“Don’t be in such a rush. It’s a good thing for you that two of them are gone now,” the old black bull said smugly. “You still have me, right? Ji Ning, kiddo, in the future, this old bull is going to follow you, and you are enormously lucky to have me.”

Ning was still filled with puzzlement. What about the other two Immortal-ranked magic treasures? The spirit of the estate wouldn’t have embezzled them, would he?

The giant yellow bear said, “The three Immortal-ranked magic treasures left behind by Immortal Juhua were the ‘Thousandbull Sword’, the ‘Nightriver Painting’, and the ‘Nine Realms Seal’.”

“The Nightriver Painting was chosen by Immortal Juhua as his reward after he overcame the seventh level of the Wargod Hall, a high grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure. Within it, it held an ancient river from the primordial era that came before the three thousand major worlds were born; the Nightriver. By drawing the enemy into the painting, the enemy would be within your domain and dramatically weakened, while

you would be able to borrow from the power of the Nightriver to increase your own might. One of the reasons why Immortal Juhua was so famous was because of this magic treasure,” the giant yellow bear said.

Ning listened, speechless. What fine treasures! Compared to the Nightriver Painting, the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp was far too inferior. That was a primordial river, the Nightriver, which existed before the three thousand major worlds had been born!

“The Nine Realms Seal was fashioned by Immortal Juhua from the extract of materials collected by Immortal Juhua after wandering nine different major worlds. This seal...naturally, it’s used to smash and crush. He used up an astonishing amount of precious materials in fashioning it, managing to brute-force it up to be a high grade Immortal-ranked seal. In his old age, Immortal Juhua loved to smash people with the seal.”

“The Thousandbull Sword...when Immortal Juhua met the Thousand Swords Immortal, the two exchanged blows. After killing the Thousand Swords Immortal and acquiring hundreds of valuable flying swords, he traded them for precious materials, using them and other treasures he had accumulated in forging a flying sword. Immortal Juhua was also a Sword Immortal; the most important thing for a Sword Immortal is their flying swords. The Thousandbull Sword was thus the weapon he used in order to dominate the world.”

Ning listened, spellbound and rapt. He couldn’t help but ask, “Then what happened to the Nightriver Painting and the Nine Realms Seal?”

Chapter 8: Carrying an Immortal Estate, Adventuring Through the World

“Let me finish,” the giant yellow bear continued. “Did you think that I just absconded with those two Immortal-ranked magic treasures? When I followed Master, I saw more treasures than you’ve even heard of.”

Ning blinked.

“After Immortal Juhua died, he left behind these three Immortal-ranked magic treasures. He died just as the Fiendgod Era had come to an end. Over the countless years that passed since then, I was completely bored out of my mind. It wasn’t convenient for me to mess around with the magic treasures which Master left behind, and so I took some of the treasures which Immortal Juhua left behind and began to retrofit them.”

“Retrofit them?!” Ning was speechless.

“The Thousandbull Sword, the Nightriver Painting, the Nine Realms Seal; all of them were pretty good, but they couldn’t be considered top-grade; they weren’t truly mighty,” the giant yellow bear said “That Nine Realms Seal in particular; it was forged in a slipshod way, completely wasting the massive amount of precious materials which were piled together to create that seal. So...I completely destroyed it, pulled out the extracted essence of it, then slowly spend the next 360 million years to completely fuse the essence into the Thousandbull Sword. This slow fusing process caused the Thousandbull Slow to evolve to a new level of power, but it didn’t disrupt any of its inherent might.”

Ning blinked again.

360 million years? Not even a Celestial Immortal would dare to waste time like this.

“But, you know, I realized the Nightriver Painting was also pretty terrible as well.” The giant yellow bear shook his large head. “A perfectly fine primordial Nightriver was being wasted, having merely been forged into a separate world. To pull the enemy into the world and fight inside

it? What sort of a terrible idea is that? So...I just completely destroyed it as well.”

“I pulled out the flows of the Nightriver from within the painting, then reforged it into a sword-diagram which I also fused into the Thousandbull Sword.”

The giant yellow bear seemed extremely smug. “Now, this is what you call a real treasure! The Thousandbull Sword, as a short, is unblockably sharp; with the extracted essence of the Nine Realms Seal, the Thousandbull Sword’s power rose dramatically. It absolutely became a top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure.”

“But after mixing in the Nightriver Painting as well...whenever the Thousandbull Sword is use, the ancient, primordial Nightriver will suddenly appear within a region of ten thousand kilometers. With the assistance of the Nightriver, one’s power will explode dramatically! The stand-alone Nightriver Painting required one to pull the enemy into it, but the upgraded Thousandbull Sword has no need to do so at all. As long as the sword is drawn, the ten-thousand kilometer Nightriver will immediately appear.” The giant yellow bear was absolutely delighted with himself. “Heh heh heh. The Pure Yang swords used by the major powers of the Three Realms...which one of them doesn’t have a sword-diagram within? How can a Sword Immortal without a sword-diagram even be considered a Sword Immortal?”

Ning was completely stunned.

“Three mighty Immortal-ranked magic treasures were combined into one. When the upgraded Thousandbull Sword leaves the sheath, the Nightriver Sword-Diagram shall appear...sword-ki shall emerge and roam about for ten thousand kilometers, completely unstoppable.” The giant yellow bear was extremely smug. “This truly is a top-grade amongst top-grade Immortal-ranked treasures. Those three original magic treasures combined aren’t even half as good as it is. As for the hundreds of millions of years I spent in total on this project, I’m not going to go into detail.”

“Thousandbull Sword!” The giant yellow bear called out.

“Coming!” The old black bull called out. Instantly, from within the mountain of treasures that was many hundreds of meters high, a black sword flew out. When this flying sword emerged, a whooshing sound of flowing water could be heard as well, as though an ancient, primordial river had begun to flow. And then...the hazy outlines of a river appeared.

When the illusion of the river appeared, space itself seemed to freeze. Ning could feel a sudden pressure envelope him as well.

The ordinary looking black flying sword had caused the entire mountain of treasures next to it to fade by comparison.

Swoosh. The old black bull immediately transformed into a streak of light, burrowing into the black flying sword.

“Ning, take a look at me; what do you think? Aren’t I awesome?” The black flying sword hovered there in midair as the old bull’s voice echoed in the halls.

Ning suddenly called out in surprise, “You, how can you move around? How can magic treasures move around on their own?!”

Magic treasures were lifeless things; without a master controlling them, how could they move around? Even if an Immortal-ranked magic treasure had given birth to a treasure-spirit, logically speaking, they shouldn’t be able to move around. For example, the Azure Silk Godfire Lamp was completely incapable of movement; it could only summon flames to block Xue Hongyi, but in the end, it was still forcibly taken away by him.

“Who told you that magic treasures can’t move around?” The giant yellow bear said. “Pure Yang treasures, for example, can soar into the heavens or delve deep into the earth.”

Pure Yang magic treasures? Those were on a higher level than even Immortal-ranked magic treasures. They were simply on a realm too far from Ning.

“Based on what I know, Immortal-ranked magic treasures aren’t capable of movement,” Ning said. “I read it in the books, and earlier, I also talked about how I acquired an Immortal-ranked magic treasure after killing

Xue Hongyi in the Witchriver Immortal Estate.”

“Are you talking about that Azuresilk Godfire Lamp?” The giant yellow bear shook his head disdainfully. “That’s just a low-grade Immortal-ranked item! It’s true that the vast majority of Immortal-ranked magic treasures are incapable of movement, and in fact, there’s extremely few top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures capable of movement as well. The Thousandbull Sword, however, is a top-grade amongst top-grades; his sentience and his power is comparable to some weak Pure Yang magic treasures. Given how sentient he is and how pure and valuable his components are, he’s naturally able to move about on his own. Still, without a master controlling him, he’s only able to release a tiny amount of his power. If your Primaltwin was to unleash its full power, you’d be able to suppress him.”

Ning was secretly speechless. His Primaltwin was at the late Primal level; when using the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] with the Grand Dao Domain and the Dao-Path of Water, he was absolutely comparable to a Loose Immortal! Only a Loose Immortal’s full power could suppress this ownerless Immortal-ranked magic treasure? The Azuresilk Godfire Lamp had been suppressed by someone like Xue Hongyi!

“Ji Ning, train hard. After you become an Earth Immortal, I can come out and fight again, hahaha...I, Thousandbull, will once be able to roam and dominate the world!” The black flying sword landed. The old black bull walked out of the blade, speaking with incomparable excitement. But then, he grew forlorn once more. “Unfortunately, Juhua has already passed away.”

Magic treasures all felt a very unique attachment to their first master; their first master was like their parents or elders.

“Perhaps he might have reincarnated.” Ning could sense the old black bull’s sadness.

“Stop trying to console me. Juhua died countless years ago. Even if he reincarnated...I can’t even imagine how many times he would’ve

reincarnated by now,” the old black bull sighed.

.....

Ning wasn't in a hurry to depart from Stillwater Commandery.. After all, there were three years left before the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. Instead, he began to calmly train in seclusion within the underwater estate.

After all, he had reached the Grand Dao Domain level, then mastered the complete Dao of Rainwater. Ning needed to quickly and completely master a way of using them to increase his power.

Time flowed on. In the blink of an eye, more than a year had passed.

Winter.

Within the Stellar Hall of the underwater estate. The space within this separate world, the Stellar Hall, was quite vast.

Ning was walking through the skies. Suddenly, he disappeared before reappearing more than ten kilometers away, where a spatial ripple had just appeared.

Swish, swish, swish. Ning blinked forward repeatedly, disappearing and reappearing as he teleported again and again.

“Success, success.” The old black bull, lying on the grassy ground next to the thatched hut, stood up and called out in delight, “Ji Ning, you’ve finally mastered the technique of teleportation.”

“It took me over a year.” The distant Ning, with a blink, reappeared in front of the thatched hut, then said, “I feel so ashamed.”

Teleporting through the void was one of the most basic, most fundamental underpinnings to the Grand Dao of the Qiankun 1.

Another name for the Grand Dao of the Qiankun was the Grand Dao of Space.

The Azure Skysnake, because of her innate abilities, was able to utilize the ‘Void Blink’ technique was a Xiantian lifeform. In truth, the Void Blink was a form of teleportation through the void! However, for an

ordinary Immortal cultivator to try and develop a void teleport technique was extremely difficult; after all, this was akin to gaining a basic understanding of a Grand Dao. The vast majority of Wanxiang Adepts would therefore purchase and keep a Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal with them at all times.

Still, virtually all Earth Immortals or Loose Immortals were capable of void teleportation. This was because, generally speaking, Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals were in control of at least one complete Dao-Path. If one mastered a complete Dao-Path, one would be able to take control of the world around them.

With but a thought, they could cause the power of the Dao to descend, placing the world around them under their control. When controlling the world around them, they would be able to clearly sense the Grand Dao of Qiankun around them. As time passed and as they did this often, they would naturally be able to comprehend the principles of teleportation.

This was why Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals, regardless of which Dao-Path they had mastered, were almost all capable of void teleportation; the only difference was in how much time they spent before achieving it.

Whoosh. The giant yellow bear suddenly appeared. “Ji Ning,” the giant yellow bear called out.

“Senior,” Ning responded.

The giant yellow bear nodded in satisfaction. This year of pain-staking, solitary training, combined with the invisible pressure from the Youngflame clan, had indeed caused Ning to improve rapidly.

“You have already completely fused your Dao of Rainwater into your Grand Dao of the Sword; your sword arts can be considered nearly perfect for your current level,” the giant yellow bear said. “However, Immortal cultivators who spend all their time in private training will never be able to become Celestial Immortals. You remain unable to break through in the Dao of the Inferno and the Dao of the Gale, unable to completely master them. This is because you’ve spent all your time here in study,

instead of going out and tempering yourself. It is now time for you to leave.”

Ning nodded gently. He, too, recently felt a desire in his heart to see the outside world; a desire to fight, to test himself.

.....

It was a cold winter. It was noon, but the skies were dark. Giant plumes of snow were drifting about in the air.

Whoosh.

A fur-clad youth suddenly appeared on Brightheart Island. Turning his head, he glanced at his surroundings. The area around him had been reduced to rubble. This was, after all, a place under the surveillance of the minions of the Youngflame clan, and in fact, Youngflame Nong’s biological father had come here as well. Because he was unable to attack the City of Ten Thousand Swords, in his rage, he had destroyed all of the buildings on Brightheart Island here in Serpentwing Lake.

“In the future, I will definitely rebuild Brightheart Island,” Ning said softly.

“Ji Ning, it is time to go. Soon, the patrols from the Youngflame clan’s Immortal cultivators will arrive.” A voice rang out within Ning’s mind; it was the voice of the spirit of the estate. Ning was now able to carry the underwater estate with him at all times.

“Right.” Ning nodded.

He lifted his head, staring at the skies.

Snow continued to drift in the skies above him.

“I remember the last time I left Swallow Mountain and went to Stillwater City...it was winter then as well. Now, it’s winter again.” Ning shook his head with a smile, then took a single step and disappeared from Brightheart Island.

Just a few moments later...

Whooooosh.

A warship came howling through the air, leaving 'waves' of air in its wake. Aboard the warship stood many armored Immortal cultivators. The watchers the Youngflame clan had sent to Serpentwing Lake included Primal Daoists and other soldiers as well. The Primal Daoists would be constantly using their divine sense to scan the region every day. However, to ensure that they wouldn't simply be fooled by bewildering formations that could affect their divine sense, they would also send ordinary soldiers over to do visual inspections, to make sure that their oversight was completely perfect.

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1. Remember my previous post about Daoism?

Chapter 9: Foundation Established

The City of Ten Thousand Swords, under the falling snow, remained as lively as ever. The city had now become the very center of the entire Swallow Mountain region; naturally, it was quite bustling! As for the grudge between the Youngflame clan and the Ji clan? Those merchants and peddlers who came and went from Swallow Mountain's commandery cities were all ordinary mortals; the Immortal cultivators stationed by the Youngflame clan weren't willing to wantonly slaughter too many mortals, as that would cause the accumulation of far too much sin.

Within a particular alleyway in the City of Ten Thousand Swords.

Space rippled, and then Ji Ning appeared. Although there were some ordinary mortals within the alleyway, they didn't seem to notice Ning's presence at all.

"These minor invisibility tricks are still useful against mortals." Ning spread his sense out, and as he did, he couldn't help but feel startled. "The city is absolutely..."

"Fellow Daoist Ji Ning." A ripple of divine sense spread out to him.

"Immortal Duohe." Ning took a single step forward, then transformed into a gust of wind and disappeared.

The Lord Prefect's estate was the heart of the entire city; it also comprised the inner city. Within a particular courtyard in the estate. Immortals Duohe and Witchsui were both seated here. A gust of wind blew in, then Ning appeared as well.

"Master."

"Ning, son." Two other figures almost simultaneously appeared as well; it was the Whitewater Hound and Little Qing. In the instant Ning had teleported to the City of Ten Thousand Swords, Uncle White and Little Ning had sensed his arrival.

"Master, it's been over a year." Little Qing, in azure serpent form, immediately coiled around Ning's arm, then raised her little serpentine

head and spoke in the human tongue. “I’ve been worried to death over you during this past year. The army of the Youngflame clan has been sending nonstop patrols around. Fortunately, I could sense that you were still alive, master; otherwise, I wouldn’t even be able to sleep.”

The Whitewater Hound looked at Ning. He, too, had been worried about Ning this entire time.

“Uncle White, Little Qing,” Ning laughed. “The Youngflame clan isn’t able to do anything to me.”

“Immortal Duohe, Immortal Witchsui.” Ning turned to look at the two already-standing monstrous Immortals, then laughed. “I didn’t expect that after being absent from here for a year, by the time of my return, your forces would have layered it in protections that render it as impregnable as an iron fortress. I sense more than a hundred different types of formations alone, and wasn’t even able to teleport into the city. Also, you discovered me as soon as I arrived; this is an even more restrictive area than some headquarters for major schools.”

Immortal Duohe nodded. “This is the core of your Ji clan, and the place where all of us monsters of the Immortal estate world have gathered. Naturally, we cannot be careless. We’ve used all our power to set up these formations; so long as any Loose Immortal dares to enter, we will immediately notice them.”

“This is the homeland of your Ji clan, and the home of our clans as well, for the next thousand years,” Immortal Witchsui said with a smile.

Ning let out a sigh of relief. He had been right to invite the monsters here.

“Not just that,” Immortal Duohe chuckled, “Our clans have a vast number of Xiantian lifeforms amid our ranks as well. We’ve sent out tens of thousands these Xiantian Diremonsters to spread out throughout the Swallow Mountain region, allowing us to completely control and oversee the mortals here as well. This way, it will be hard for the Youngflame clan to kill the mortals.”

Ning nodded. It was a grave sin to kill ordinary mortals, but Xiantian

lifeforms had yet to truly embark on the Immortal path; the amount of sin they accumulated was much lower.

“This is the decision which we came to after negotiating with Old Patriarch Ninefire. The Old Patriarch was worried that the Youngflame clan would butcher ordinary mortals with abandon,” Immortal Duohe said. “Actually, I feel that the Old Patriarch is worrying too much; the Youngflame clan is, after all, a major clan that has existed for countless years. Clans like this care tremendously about their karmic luck. Even if they send Xiantian lifeforms to slaughter ordinary mortals, there will still be some degree of sin that will surround the bodies of the Youngflame clan members, which will affect the luck of the clan as a whole. Although it won’t have a huge impact, given how much these ancient clans care about luck, they absolutely wouldn’t do anything that would negatively influence it, just for the sake of giving vent to a bit of anger.”

Ning nodded. Luck. You couldn’t see it, nor could you feel it. But it did indeed exist. Those blessed by luck were the favored of heaven, and their lives would naturally be different. For example, the Grand Xia Dynasty established the Raindragon Guard, whose primary mission was to constantly capture and kill major sinners and thus allowing the Dynasty’s luck to constantly rise!

“I’ll trouble you all to take care of my Ji clan’s affairs,” Ning said. “I need to go see the clan leader and the others. Afterwards, I’ll leave the city, and it will most likely be many years before we meet again.”

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, you must be careful,” Immortal Witchsui and Immortal Duohe both said.

“Right.” Ning nodded. And then, he led Uncle White and Little Qing to go see the clan leader.

.....

Ji Ninefire and the others had no idea that Ning had returned. Soon, however, Ning’s divine sense reached out to Ji Ninefire, Granny Shadow, and Ji Truekeep, who went to go meet with Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing in a secluded courtyard.

Rumble...the door to the courtyard shut.

Ninefire, Granny Shadow, and Truekeep all looked at Ning. Given they had secluded themselves in this place, the conversation was undoubtedly a weighty one.

Ning spread out his divine sense as well, keeping a vigilant watch on the surrounding area.

“We are going to leave the City of Ten Thousand Swords soon. I don’t know how long this journey will last, or if I will be able to return,” Ning said.

“Ji Ning, don’t say such things; you’ll definitely be able to return,” Ninefire said hurriedly.

Ning laughed. “Alright. I’ll definitely be able to return. Before leaving, there’s something I want to give you all.”

“Oh?” Ninefire and the others were quite curious.

Ning waved his hand, and the floor became filled with piles of magic treasures, such as swords, spears, staffs, needles, shuttles, grand seals, ribbons, and horsetail whisks. The treasures were numerous beyond counting.

“This is?” Ninefire and the others held their breaths.

Ning waved his arm again, and nearly thousand magic treasures appeared on the ground.

Yet another wave of the arm, and ten more treasures appeared as well.

“There are more than ten thousand Mortal-ranked magic treasures, nine hundred-plus Earth-ranked magic treasures, and twelve Heaven-ranked magic treasures,” Ning said. “Even if our Ji clan produces several Primal Daoists and a group of Wanxiang Adepts, these treasures should be enough for us.”

“It’s enough, it’s enough. Immortal cultivators usually acquire magic treasures through adventuring in the outside world,” Ninefire said hurriedly. “At most, the clan will provide a little bit of support. So many

treasures...Ning, son, where in the world did you get them?”

Ning didn't answer. Instead, he waved his hand again. A large number of spirit-pills and valuable treasures and materials appeared.

“These are all spirit-pills and valuable materials,” Ning said. “There are some commonly seen Immortal elixirs and pills here. Clan leader, if you flip through this book, you'll know what is here. As for the most precious spirit-pills and materials, I've written down a book explaining their value and usage. You can't be too wild in your use of these things; after all, some of them are poisonous in nature.”

This caused Ninefire and the others to all feel breathless.

“These magic treasures are all external items.” Ning solemnly waved his hand, and instantly, a vast, dense cluster of books appeared, filling more than half of the hall and rising to thirty meters in height.

“This will be our Dao Repository,” Ning said. “It includes everything, and in number should be even larger than Snowdragon Mountain's.”

He had killed Xue Hongyi, Youngflame Nong, and had also acquired the Dao Repository of the Witchriver Immortal Estate.

“These eighteen sets are the most important.” Ning waved his hand yet again. “Here there are Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques, Fiendgod Body Refining techniques, divine abilities, and divine will arts,” Ning said. “These are precious techniques which Celestial Immortals and those on their level use; some of them aren't even available to the Black-White College.”

Ninefire, Truekeep, and Granny Shadow were all completely stunned.

Divine abilities?

Divine will techniques?

These were things that only existed in legendary Dao Repositories. Actually, these things had been left behind both by Immortal Juhua and the Witchriver Immortal Estate. Immortal Juhua had lived for millions of years, after all, and his combat power was comparable to a Celestial

Immortal's; he had acquired quite a few Dao Repositories in his time. In other words, Ning's repository was the combination of the ones that had belonged to Immortal Witchriver and Immortal Juhua!

Immortal Juhua was a lone wanderer with no clan to worry about, and so the techniques he left behind were all top-notch, at least at the Heaven-rank.

"These eighteen sets that I'm giving to you," Ning said solemnly, "Absolutely must not be taught to others. They are the hope for our Ji clan's rise to power, the heart of our heart. Who to pass them down to? When to pass them down? I've left behind my recommendations on this book." Ning handed a book directly over to Truekeep. Truekeep, hands trembling, accepted it.

He was completely stunned. Perhaps this repository was quite a bit weaker than the Dao Repository which the Black-White College had accumulated over the course of countless years, but it definitely far surpassed the likes of Snowdragon Mountain, and definitely ranked amongst the top ten or so of the entire Stillwater Commandery. Those divine abilities and secret arts in particular...the other powers didn't have them at all.

Whoosh. Ning waved his hand yet again, and a pile of statues appeared. A total of nine golems, all of Qiongqi Manticores.

"Master." The nine Qiongqi Manticore golems all looked towards Ning with respect.

He had originally acquired thirty six Qiongqi golems and the black-armored male golem from the Witchriver Immortal Estate. The giant yellow bear had completely disassembled them, then rebuilt them into eighteen Qiongqi golems. As for that black-armored male golem? He was completely, truly finished; he no longer existed.

After the retrofitting of the eighteen Qiongqi golems, every single one of them was now close to a Loose Immortal in combat power. Nine of them could join together to form into a 'Grand Nine Heavens Formation', and even Ning's Primaltwin fighting at full power still found it hard to

overcome them when surrounded.

“These nine golems are each close to a Loose Immortal in combat power. For a single one to actually kill a Primal Daoist on its own might be difficult,” Ning said, “But once the nine join forces into a golem formation...they will be able to kill Primal Daoists as easily as killing chickens. This will become our Ji clan’s final trump card. Every single one of them has an elemental ki formation within their bodies, and they can absorb natural elemental energy and distill it into liquefied elemental essence, so there’s no need for you to provide them with a power supply. However, remember this...don’t use them too often. Once they use up the essence inside, they will no longer be able to fight. You can ask them yourself how much energy they have remaining and how much longer they can fight for.”

“Kill Primal Daoists as easily as killing chickens?” Ninefire, Truekeep, and Granny Shadow exchanged a glance. They were completely filled with joy by this situation.

“Ji Ning,” Ninefire said hurriedly, “I know about golems. Such powerful, mighty golems are incomparably valuable; it’s better to keep them by your side. You will be experiencing countless dangers; these golems will be of great use to you.”

“For me, killing Primal Daoists is also as easy as killing chickens,” Ning said..

Ninefire and the others were speechless.

These words were simply too savage and brutal. If Ning dared to say these words, that meant he absolutely had the combat power of a Loose Immortal! Actually, Ning’s true body wasn’t that strong, but his Primaltwin? It definitely did have that power.

“Hurry up and collect these,” Ning said.

“Right, right. Truekeep, hurry up and collect them,” Ninefire said hurriedly.

Truekeep nodded. “These treasures cannot leave the City of Ten

Thousand Swords; in fact, they can't even leave the Lord Prefect's manor. I'll allow these nine Loose Immortal golems to guard them."

.....

Everything had been arranged.

The door to the hall swung open.

Ning led Uncle White and Little Qing out, transforming into a gust of wind that disappeared into the skies.

Truekeep, Ninefire, and Granny Shadow raised their heads, staring into the firmament.

"Our Ji clan's foundation has been established. So long as we are given enough time, we will definitely become one of the local hegemons of Stillwater Commandery." Ninefire murmured silently to himself, "Although my life is coming to an end...it's enough...it's enough. Even in death, my life will have been worth it. Yichuan...I knew your son was formidable, but not that he was this formidable! You produced a fine son!"

Truekeep and Granny Shadow were both in a stunned state as well.

They both understood...that because of the things Ji Ning had left behind today, the Ji clan now had a powerful foundation. Like seeds entering fertile mud, the only thing left to do was to wait. All they needed now...was time!

Chapter 10: Imperial Capital of the Grand Xia

The Crimson Dragon Mountains. The local branch of the Raindragon Guard. The enormous, tower-shaped teleportation array. There was a white-robed elder seated in the lotus position next to it, quietly waiting.

“It seems as the Youngflame clan’s hatred for Ji Ning is truly bone-deep. They instructed me long ago to help keep an eye out, and to immediately inform them upon discovering him.” Ten servants near the teleportation array were whispering and laughing amongst themselves. “And yet, they also sent one of the Raindragon Guards belonging to their clan to stay here permanently and keep watch.”

“It’s been over a year. Ji Ning definitely left Stillwater Commandery long ago, but this Raindragon Guard of the Youngflame clan is still waiting here like an idiot.”

“Everyone says that Ji Ning killed that young master ‘Youngflame Nong’; how could the Youngflame clan not be enraged? Stillwater Commandery is Ji Ning’s homeland, and this teleportation array of ours is the largest one within Stillwater Commandery, capable of sending someone to any place in the Grand Xia Empire. They are definitely going to stay on watch here permanently.”

Just as the two servants were chatting, the teleportation array suddenly lit up.

“Someone is coming.” The ten servants all turned their heads to look. As for the white-robed elder who had been in the lotus position this entire time, he opened his eyes out of habit. He had been on watch here for far too long, but each time the teleportation array lit up or someone used the array to leave, he would still pay attention.

Rumble!

A fur-clad youth appeared within the teleportation array. On his arm was a little azure serpent, while by his side was a large, snowy white dog.

“Ji Ning!” The ten servants responsible for maintaining the teleportation array, as well as the distant, lotus-seated white-robed elder, all called out in shock.

A fur-clad youth? An azure snake? A large, snowy white dog? This was... a perfect match! And he looked identical to Ji Ning as well!

“He, is he Ji Ning?” The white-robed elder couldn’t help but look towards those ten servants of the array. What his thinking was, even if Ji Ning was going to use the teleportation array, he would most likely do it in secret! For example, he might change his appearance, change his clothes, and temporarily hide his spirit-beasts, making others unable to see that it was him. For Ji Ning to suddenly appear without any disguises at all...this actually made it so that he couldn’t believe what he was seeing.

“Could it be a fake?” The white-robed elder suddenly had this thought.

“That’s him. He’s Ji Ning.” Those ten servants of the array all spoke out. “We met him several times before. There’s no mistake.”

“Yes. I am Ji Ning.”

The fur-clad youth stood there within the formation, sweeping those ten with his gaze. The ten were so frightened, they hurriedly took several steps back. This was a branch of the Raindragon Guard; if Ji Ning dared to kill someone, he would become a wanted criminal and be pursued! They all knew that the chances of him attacking were very low, but when they thought about the fact that he was already being pursued by the Youngflame clan, they felt that he might be capable of doing anything. Naturally, these ten servants felt a bit of dread.

“Everyone,” Ning said. “I am going to the imperial capital. Please activate the teleportation array.”

“The imperial capital?” The ten servants were amazed. He wasn’t going to flee to a distant place; instead, he was going to the very heart of the Grand Xia Empire?

“Are you going to activate it or not?” Ning barked.

“Alright.” After a brief moment of surprise, the ten calmed down. No matter what, the grudge between the Youngflame clan and Ji Ning was a private matter. Ji Ning was still nominally a Raindragon Guard; they could not bar his way to the imperial capital. The ten immediately began to make minor adjustments to the teleportation array.

“Wait a moment. I’m going to the imperial capital as well.” The white-robed elder immediately walked over, stepping into the teleportation array.

Within the array.

Ning and the white-robed elder exchanged glances.

“You are quite bold,” the white-robed elder said in a low voice. “It’s been more than a year, but you actually have dared to return in Stillwater Commandery!”

“This is my homeland. Why wouldn’t I dare to return?” Ning gave him a sidelong glance. “Did you actually wait here for me this entire time? Poor bastard.” This man’s strength was ordinary; after scanning him with divine sense, Ning estimated that he probably should be a Wanxiang Adept. It was also possible that he vastly surpassed Ning, causing Ning to be completely unable to tell how terrifyingly strong he was.

Given the attunement towards the Dao which Ning’s divine sense now had, to make it so that even he couldn’t discover anything at all...the man would have to be at least at the Celestial Immortal level.

But clearly, there was no way this watchman could have been a Celestial Immortal.

“You’ve returned to Stillwater Commandery. And now, after revealing your whereabouts, you plan to go straight to the imperial capital? Hmph, hmph. Ji Ning, you won’t be able to escape. Those who my Youngflame clan wish to kill will definitely die,” the white-robed elder said.

“Oh, is that so? Then hurry up and kill me,” Ning smirked.

“The two of you, we’ve finished our adjustments to the teleportation array. We will send you to the imperial capital now.” The ten servants,

while speaking, stepped back and activated the array.

Soon, the teleportation array lit up.

Whooooosh.

The array was now empty. Everything inside had vanished.

.....

The imperial capital of the Grand Xia. This was the very core of this entire major world. It was truly a place where the fish swam with the dragons, where experts were as common as the clouds. In terms of size of commandery cities or number of experts, compared to the imperial capital...Stillwater Commandery was nothing more than a backwater.

Within a tall, towering mountain within the imperial capital. This was the tallest mountain within the imperial capital, and its name...was Raindragon Godpeak.

The Raindragon Godpeak was the most towering edifice present. Even the tallest building of the imperial citadel, the Skylight Palace, was slightly lower.

Raindragon Godpeak was ten thousand kilometers high, while the Skylight Palace of the imperial citadel was 9999 kilometers high! These were the two most towering structures of the imperial capital...and in fact, there were no buildings in the entire Grand Xia Empire which were taller than these two. Correct – buildings! In truth, the Raindragon Godpeak, while nominally a ‘mountain’, was actually an enormous magic treasure building!

Halfway up Raindragon Godpeak, there were numerous, enormous teleportation arrays. This was the center of this major world, and in fact, it was to here where those from other major worlds would come!

Whoosh.

In one of the many teleportation arrays halfway up the mountain. Suddenly, a number of people appeared. There was a white-robed elder, a fur-clad youth, a little azure snake, and a large snowy white dog.

“He’s Ji Ning. Hurry up and make the report.” As soon as the white-robed elder appeared, he turned his gaze to two armored men in a higher part of the mountain and sent a mental message to them. These two armored men were on permanent station here, and were responsible for welcoming the guests of the Youngflame clan.

“Ji Ning?” The two armored warriors were shocked. They exchanged a glance, and then one of them immediately flew down from his position.

Ning, with Little Qing and Uncle White by his side, leisurely strolled over towards the edge of the cliff. From this position, he could stare down and marvel at the vast, endless imperial city. As he stared down...there was actually not a cloud to be seen. Although he was more than three thousand kilometers in the air, when he looked downwards, he didn’t see any clouds at all, nor was there any smoke or dust; nothing hindered his vision.

From their vantage point, an enormous, awe-inspiring commandery city could be seen, a city that seemed to have no end. Far away, there was a towering, massive Immortal palace that was as large as this mountain. This was the place the Emperor of the Grand Xia normally resided; the Skylight Palace. The Skylight Palace, 9999 kilometers tall, was a single massive magic treasure. It emanated all sorts of brilliant, blinding light; golden light, silver light, red light, azure light, violet light...

The streams of light shone over the entire imperial capital.

At the highers point of the Skylight Palace, starting at roughly six thousand kilometers or so, fog and mist could be seen, as well as a layer of incomparably beautiful red clouds.

“It is said that the Skylight Palace of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia is 9999 kilometers high. At 6000 kilometers, there is a layer of red clouds, with multiple other layers of clouds beyond that, for a total of nine layers! In terms of power and prestige...it can absolutely compare to the Sacred Palace of the Skies 1 of the Deva Realm. That’s what is said...and today, I can see that it truly is extraordinary.” Ning sighed in amazement.

“They are so high. Everyone says that both the Skylight Palace and Raindragon Godpeak are magic treasures,” Little Qing called out in amazement. “Look at the infinite light the Skylight Palace is giving off... that power and might...if such a massive palace is actually a magic treasure, what level of magic treasure is it?!”

“Immortal-ranked at the very least, and most likely Pure Yang-ranked,” Ning said softly.

“Let’s go down.”

Ning led Little Qing and Uncle White, flying down from the mountain. Whoosh! They flew along the wind, staring down at the seemingly endless imperial capital and feeling completely stunned. This was no mortal city...this was a city which should only exist in the Deva Realm.

“According to legend, Immortal Eastroam, ‘Dong You’, once led the Immortals and Fiendgods of a major world to assault the Deva Realm, forcing that power of the Deva Realm to lower their heads and allow him to reunite with his beloved.” Ning sighed, moved. “As I look at the power of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia...I now believe that an emperor of a major world does indeed have this level of power.”

Ning had realized some time ago that in the books regarding the Deva Realm and the Netherworld Kingdom, it seemed as though the Celestial Emperor wasn’t viewed as being tremendously important. It seemed as though the emperors of major worlds were completely qualified to sit down and chat with the Celestial Emperor as equals. This was the feeling which Ning had after reading those books.

.....

They flew down Raindragon Godpeak, landing on a long street that seemed to be made from clouds. They saw, atop this massive street, countless people either flying on magic treasures, riding flying carriages, or mounted on spirit-beasts. Not a single mortal could be seen.

Ning turned his head to look backwards; behind him was the seemingly infinitely tall Raindragon Godpeak. “Raindragon Godpeak is actually slightly taller than even the Skylight Palace. The Skylight Palace is the

place where the Emperor of the Grand Xia resides, whereas Raindragon Godpeak is nothing more than the headquarters of the Raindragon Guard. Why have they been raised to such an exalted status?

Ning was secretly puzzled. The height of a building had to conform to exacting requirements; for the Skylight Palace to be 9999 kilometers tall meant that no one in any of the other commandery cities would dare to construct a building of such heights. But Raindragon Godpeak was actually slightly higher...

“The imperial capital lives up to its reputation,” Ning said. “Come, let’s go wander about the city.”

Ning no longer pondered this matter. He immediately produced a construct-carriage. It appeared, surrounded by mist, with a black dragon construct pulling it. This carriage had been left behind by Youngflame Nong! Although Immortal Juhua had left behind far more treasures than Youngflame Nong, including fine Immortal carriages as well, Ning decided it was best to be a bit low-key.

Whoosh. The black dragon carriage flew forward, with Ning seated in the carriage, an azure snake on one side and the Whitewater Hound on the other. Soon, the carriage reached the walls of the imperial city.

The imperial city was surrounded by a wall that was more than thirty thousand meters high. It had an enormous gate, and the gate was guarded by four human-shaped Fiendgods that were also thirty thousand meters tall. Of the four Fiendgods, the first had red skin and flames coming out of his nostrils, the second had azure skin and was surrounded by watery mist, the third gleamed with golden light and had a sharp golden gaze, while the fourth was completely pitch-black and had a giant snake wrapped around its body.

These four Fiendgods guarded the city gate. Regardless of entry or exit, they had to first give permission.

“My God.” Ning stared at these four titanic Fiendgods. He couldn’t help but shake in amazement.

“Master, those four Fiendgods, it, it feels as though each of them are

comparable to that one from the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains.”
Little Qing and Uncle White sighed in amazement as well.

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1. This is where the Jade Emperor of Chinese mythology resides in Heaven.

Chapter 11: A Major Business Deal

The imperial capital. Within the Youngflame clan's estate.

"Clan leader." An azure-robed middle-aged man flew in a rush into a study, then knelt down, unable to mask the excitement on his face.

"We've found Ji Ning."

The Godplume Duke, who was seated behind a table, flipping through a book, was stunned upon hearing this. And then, he called out in delight, "Found Ji Ning?"

It had been more than a year.

Per the orders from Patriarch Arcanum, the Godplume Duke had been searching for Ji Ning's traces this entire time, but Ji Ning seemed to have completely disappeared, leaving behind no traces behind at all. In fact, the Godplume Duke actually believed that Ji Ning had perhaps hidden himself within another lesser world or major world. In fact, he had thought that ten or twenty years might go by without any traces of Ji Ning being discovered. For Ji Ning to kill the successor to the Youngflame clan and then leave completely unhindered was a humiliation to the entire Youngflame clan...but if they couldn't find him, what could they do about it?

And yet, they actually found him!

"Where is he?" The Godplume Duke immediately asked.

"Ji Ning has already arrived here in the imperial capital. We followed him the entire time," the azure-robed man said hurriedly.

"The imperial capital? He came to the imperial capital?" The Godplume Duke frowned. The imperial capital was tightly guarded, and here in the imperial capital, without a shadow of a doubt the most powerful organization was the imperial clan of the Grand Xia. For Ji Ning to come to the imperial capital actually made things more difficult.

"He actually came to the imperial capital. Fighting is forbidden in the imperial capital...what should we do about him, then?" The Godplume

Duke continued to frown. In some other commandery cities, the Youngflame had quite a large amount of influence, but in the imperial capital, there were quite a few clans more powerful than the Youngflame clan...and in the end, there was the Imperial Xiamang clan, which had completely unified this major world.

In the face of the Imperial Xiamang clan, even the supremely powerful clans such as the Youngflame clan, the Kindwater clan, and the Skyfarmer clan had to tread carefully.

“Ji Ning must be followed continuously. Keep a close watch on his movements,” the Godplume Duke ordered. “Don’t do anything else for now; just await my orders.”

“Yes.” The azure-robed man immediately acknowledged the order.

It was true that Patriarch Arcanum had originally ordered for Ji Ning to be killed immediately upon him being found, but this was the imperial capital! To kill someone inside the capital...this was a challenge to the Imperial Xiamang clan! The only way to do it was to send out Deathsworn, Deathsworn who wouldn’t betray the Youngflame clan even after being captured.

“Given how tightly guarded the imperial capital is, once battle begins, most likely in the space of a single breath, the Imperial Guard of the Grand Xia will immediately arrive,” the Godplume Duke pondered to himself. “To find a Deathsworn who can kill Ji Ning in just the space of a single breath...where am I supposed to find such a Deathsworn? Ji Ning has acquired many of Youngflame Nong’s treasures!”

Ji Ning was powerful to begin with. Given that he had protective treasures on him as well, even Loose Immortals would find it hard to defeat him in such a short period of time. A Deathsworn like this would be very difficult to find.

“I’ll go see the Patriarch.” The Godplume Duke no longer hesitated.

Soon, the nine Flood Dragons flew outwards, pulling an Immortal carriage behind them with the Godplume Duke seated within it. They howled through the air, leaving the imperial capital and entering the

azure skies.

.....

Filled with curiosity, Ning continued to stare at the imperial citadel, and also at the distant Skylight Palace. Alas, given Ning's status, how could he possibly be allowed to enter the imperial ccitadel? And so, a few moments later, his black dragon carriage flew away.

"Master, there are three people behind us now," Little Qing glanced backwards. Ning, seated within the carriage, glanced backwards as well. There was a long shuttle behind them, with a white-robed elder and two others on it. Earlier, the only one following them had been the white-robed elder, but now, there were three in total.

"One is a Primal Daoist." Ning could feel those behind him reaching out through divine sense, and he immediately sent his own divine sense crushing backwards as well.

BOOM.

[Soulshaker Art]! Their divine senses collided, and instantly, the face of the tall, thin, azure-robed man changed. "This Ji Ning actually has such a powerful soul?"

After the divine sense collision, the three behind Ning immediately grew much more 'obedient', no longer trying to challenge him.

"Ning, son, where shall we go next?" The Whitewater Hound sent through their spirit-link.

"To the Heavenly Treasures Mountain," Ning sent back through their spirit-link as well. "I've acquired quite a few treasures this time; the amount of magic treasures alone is quite astonishing. With so many magic treasures...I should go to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain to exchange them for liquefied elemental essence, then trade for treasures I actually need."

Right now, what Ning needed the most desperately was treasures which contained the purified essences of the Five Elements, so that he could begin training on the second Cycle.

Whoosh.

The black dragon carriage advanced at an astonishing speed through the wide streets. The streets of the imperial capital were all extremely wide. The several major thoroughfares were actually built and 'tiled' with clouds, causing them to seem extraordinarily beautiful. Even the ordinary streets were tiled with incredibly rare and precious stones.

"The main headquarters of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain lives up to its name." Ning's eyes lit up as he stared into the distance. The other Heavenly Treasures Mountains in the various commandery cities were merely local branches; this one here in the imperial capital was the true center. Many of the most rare and precious curios were all stored here in the main headquarters. Many Immortals would come to the imperial capital expressly for the purpose of purchasing items at the main headquarters of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain that could not be found elsewhere."

"It really is huge." Little Qing's eyes were filled with excitement as well.

The Whitewater Hound raised his head as well. He had never before seen such a beautiful place. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain before them was structured like an enormous qilin creature which lay there, nearly ten thousand kilometers long. In other words, the size of this Heavenly Treasures Mountain was comparable to the entire Stillwater City.

Whoosh.

The black dragon carriage quickly flew into the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.

"Let's first get something to eat, then sell off our treasures." Ning was in a superb mood. He paid no attention to those three following him, and the black dragon carriage flew straight in, under the guidance of the greeters.

The main headquarters of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain was filled with enormous crystalline mirrors which hung in the air everywhere, nearly covering the entirety of the sky at a height of tens of kilometers.

Beneath the countless mirmrors, many Immortal cultivators were congregating.

Swoosh.

As Ning, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing flew into the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, one of the mirrors quickly locked onto them.

“Black dragon carriage, the one used by young master Youngflame Nong of the Youngflame clan. Youngflame Nong has already been killed by Ji Ning..”

“The rider on the carriage is dressed in magic robes in the shape of furs, and looks identical to Ji Ning.”

“Next to him are two Godbeasts; Azure Skysnake and Whitewater Hound.”

“99% chance of the youth being Ji Ning.”

This report was quickly duplicated and spread out, and as it was, it was sent out through one of the thousands of intelligence channels. This was a location under constant surveillance by the main headquarters, as every day, all sorts of figures would arrive, including those from other major worlds or even the Deva Realm or the Netherworld Kingdom. All sorts of intelligence reports could be generated here, of greater or lesser import. As for the news of Ji Ning...in the eyes of the many intelligence agencies, he was very unremarkable and ordinary.

“Ji Ning has already appeared within the main headquarters of our Heavenly Treasures Mountain. There are five customers who have a standing purchase order for all information regarding him. Immediately deliver these reports to them.” A black-robed woman gave a calm order, and soon, the Heavenly Treasures Mountain sent out five subordinates, each with a copy of an intelligence report, towards five different locations in the imperial capital.

Immediately report Ji Ning’s whereabouts upon discovering him! There were five customers who had standing purchase orders of this nature.

“Is that the Blackwater Carriage?” Within the Heavenly Treasures

Mountain, a violet-robed man stared into the distance as Ning, aboard his carriage, entered a private courtyard. The black dragon carriage brought him all the way into the courtyard, then Ning entered a two-story building within the estate, sitting down alongside Little Qing and Uncle White to enjoy some of delicacies that came from places throughout the Grand Xia Empire, and even from some other major worlds.

“Fur-clad youth? Azure Skysnake? Whitewater Hound?” The violet-robed man murmured to himself, “Can this be the Ji Ning who killed Youngflame Nong? He truly is ignorant, to dare to so be so arrogant and open...he’s probably already been discovered by the intelligence division, and the Youngflame clan will most likely quickly be aware of him as well. However, none of that has anything to do with me.”

“Youngflame Nong was quite wealthy. Ji Ning killed him...and must have taken his many treasures. It seems my opportunity has come.” The violet-robed man’s eyes lit up, and he immediately, leisurely walked forward. A few moments later, he arrived outside the courtyard. He stood there, outside the courtyard, waiting silently, not entering.

A long time later...

“Who is it outside?” Ning’s voice rang out.

“Yu Qi of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain,” the violet-robed man laughed.

“Enter,” Ning said.

The violet-robed man obediently entered, quickly arriving at that two-story building. He followed the stairs up to the second floor, where Ji Ning, an azure-robed maiden, and a white-robed man were seated. They had essentially finished eating..

“You were outside the courtyard for quite some time. What for?” Ning leisurely held a cup of wine in his hand, sweeping this Yu Qi with a weighing gaze. Yu Qi’s power...from what Ning could tell, he should be at the Wanxiang level.

“I am responsible for purchasing and selling treasures on behalf of the

main Heavenly Treasures Mountain,” Yu Qi said modestly. “For example, if some people wish to sell their treasures or want to buy something special, I can assist. And of course, for the deals that I was responsible for carrying out, the main Heavenly Treasures Mountain will give me some rewards.”

Ning nodded lightly. “You recognize me?”

Yu Qi laughed. “I immediately recognized that carriage that you rode on, fellow Daoist Ji Ning. The carriage is known as the ‘Blackwater Carriage’, and was used in the past by Youngflame Nong; he often rode in it to come to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. Thus, quite a few people recognize it. Upon seeing the carriage, seeing the way you look, and the Azure Skysnake and Whitewater Hound by your side, I was able to guess that you are the ‘legendary’ Ji Ning.”

“It seems I’m quite famous. Even the imperial capital knows about me.” Ning couldn’t help but laugh.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, you might not be aware of this, but you are indeed quite well-known,” Yu Qi laughed. “Youngflame Nong was one of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital. Although they were described as the Four Dukelings, they weren’t necessarily the most powerful individuals of their generation; however, they had exalted statuses, were extremely wealthy, and loved to have fun. Youngflame Nong, however, ended up dying in the outside world. This news was naturally picked up by interested parties. Although the Youngflame clan never publicized it, anyone who did just a bit of investigation would realize that the killer was Ji Ning. Thus, your information was quickly unearthed by many as well. You have as spirit-beasts a Whitewater Hound and an Azure Skysnake; you like to dress in fur-shaped magic robes; you are extremely talented in swordplay, and have the appearance of a delicate, handsome youth...”

Yu Qi rambled on and on, while Ji Ning, Little Qing, and Uncle White just stared.

It seemed as though after having killing Youngflame Nong, he truly had become quite well-known in the imperial capital.

“...and I guessed that the reason you came here today, fellow Daoist Ji Ning, was to sell off some treasures,” Yu Qi laughed. “And I, here at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, specialize in this sort of business.”

Chapter 12: Tears

Right at this moment, someone suddenly knocked at the door. “Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, might I come in?”

“Eh?” Yu Qi frowned. This voice was quite familiar.

The door swung open.

A short, chubby old man walked in, also dressed in violet. The man looked towards Ning and bowed. “Hawkart greets you, fellow Daoist Ji Ning.” He smiled casually towards Yu Qi. “Yu Qi, you came quite quickly.”

“Fellow Daoist Hawkart, you actually discovered fellow Daoist Ji Ning so quickly. I’m quite surprised.” Yu Qi let out a cold snort. Both of them were responsible for dealing in the treasure trade. Everyone loved treasures, especially rare ones. When absolutely unique, one-of-a-kind treasures were discovered, the main Heavenly Treasures Mountain would go and collect them and offer them only to the imperial clan, not selling them to outsiders. That was why some of the major clans and sects, in order to avoid certain precious treasures from being completely monopolized by the imperial clan, would also collect many treasures and keep them internally.

For example, the Northmont clan of Stillwater had the ‘Carefree Caverns’, which was secretly collecting precious items as well. And in turn, the Heavenly Treasures Mountain had a number of people who were responsible for befriending experts and acquiring treasures from them.

“I didn’t ‘discover’ fellow Daoist Ji Ning; it was he who declared his interest in selling treasures, which is why I learned of this,” the violet-robed elder laughed.

Yu Qi was startled.

Ning, seated there, said calmly, “I came to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain this time for the purpose of selling treasures. Thus, I had already instructed the attendant to make it known. I imagine that fellow Daoist Hawkart was notified by the attendant.”

Yu Qi now understood. The short elder said proactively, “Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, if you sell your treasures to me, I will definitely give you a price that satisfies you.”

“I don’t really care who I sell them to. To me, this is but a small matter.” Ning looked at the two. After entering into a feud with the Youngflame clan, Ning’s Dao-heart had improved considerably, and the two in front of him weren’t able to entice him at all. “I know quite well that the most common treasures are always purchased at 60% of actual value by the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.”

Yu Qi and the short elder both nodded.

“Come, let’s go to a larger location.” Ning rose to his feet. “As for who I will sell the treasures to, we can discuss that in a bit.”

“This way, please.” “After you.” Yu Qi and the short elder both responded with warmth.

Moments later, they arrived within a large garden, where only maidservants were present.

“All of you, leave.”

Yu Qi and the short elder were both dressed in violet robes. Upon their entrance, the maidservants immediately left obediently.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, how about this garden? Large enough?” Yu Qi glanced at the surrounding area. “Generally speaking, when Loose Immortals trade with us, they’ll come to this type of location.”

Ning swept the area with his gaze. In the center of the garden, there was a gazebo, next to which was nearly a three hundred meter region of polished stone, surrounded by precious flowers of all types.

“It’ll work.” Ning nodded, then waved his hand. Instantly, an awe-inspiringly massive pile of magic treasures appeared on the ground. There were more than a hundred thousand Mortal-ranked, ten thousand Earth-ranked, and a hundred-plus Heaven-ranked. “First calculate as to roughly how much these treasures are worth.”

“Whoah.”

Yu Qi and the short elder both took deep breaths. This many treasures?

“This is just a portion,” Ning said calmly. “I’ll sell them to whoever gives me the best price. Oh, right; if I recall correctly, as long as the value of a business deal reaches two hundred and fifty thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, one can receive a ‘Xia’ insignia, right?”

“Right.” Yu Qi and the short elder didn’t hesitate at all. “Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, don’t worry at all; we will definitely give you a ‘Xia’ insignia.” Just by a quick visual appraisal, they could tell that the treasures in front of them definitely exceeded the necessary value.

Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing sat down within the gazebo, leisurely sipping wine and laughing.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh. The magic treasures were quickly divided by type. Yu Qi and the short elder both carefully assessed every single magic treasure. Since the main Heavenly Treasures Mountain employed them to deal in treasures, they were clearly no ordinary Wanxiang Adepts. Each of them had memorized the prices of hundreds of millions of types of magic treasures and items, as well as the details regarding them. Their memories, naturally, were unfathomably superior to the memories of ordinary mortals.

Still, it took them a full hour before they finally came to a halt.

“The Mortal-ranked treasures would round up to be 40,600 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. The Earth-ranked treasures are approximately 252,500 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. As for the Heaven-ranked, the highest price I can give is roughly 560,000 kilograms,” Yu Qi said. “A final price of 853,100 kilograms for everything.”

“I can give you 855,000 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence,” the short elder said.

“Me too,” Yu Qi said hurriedly.

Ning chuckled. “Any higher prices?”

Yu Qi and the short elder exchanged glances, secretly feeling hateful towards each other. Ning just laughed. Actually, most of these were mass produced magic treasures, and so the price that could be offered for them was set in stone. Those hundred or so Heaven-ranked treasures, however, did include a few that should have been personally produced by an Immortal, and thus were priced differently and with some fluctuation. Still, the overall price wouldn't change much.

"So that's the price for the treasures, eh?" Ning waved his hand again. "I have quite a few more treasures here as well. Give me a calculation and an offer; the magic treasures and these curios will go to the high bidder."

The ground was instantly filled with a huge amount of Immortal grass, spirit-pills, protective curios, and other such items. These protective items were useful for Youngflame Nong, but with Ning now having a Primaltwin, Ning's combat power was now comparable to a Loose Immortals, and so the treasures were useless to him.

"Eh?" Yu Qi and the short elder's eyes lit up. Immortal grass, spirit-pills, and protective curios?

There was some degree of fluctuation in the price of treasures that couldn't be mass-produced. They would be able to make the most profit from these items. As for those magic treasures...although there was a high number of them, there was very little margin to be made.

"What a fellow. He really did take out all of Youngflame Nong's treasures," Yu Qi murmured to himself.

"It's been quite a while since I've seen so many nice items," the short elder said, his eyes shining as well.

The two rapidly began to calculate while pondering internally as well.

"The magic treasures, combined with these various other treasures...I can offer you 1,300,000 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence!" Yu Qi gritted his teeth, then made the offer. "If this old fellow gives a higher price, then I'll bow out."

The short elder was stunned. He stared at Yu Qi in amazement. "Are

you mad?”

Ning was completely amazed as well. Ning had actually already had an estimate in mind regarding the value of the medicinal items and magic treasures he had taken from the Witchriver Immortal Estate.

“Can you beat that offer?” Yu Qi stared at the short elder, savagery in his eyes.

“Eh, I’m too old for this.” The short elder shook his head and sighed. “I don’t dare act as crazily as you. Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, I bid you farewell. Yu Qi, the end of my life will be coming soon. Let me offer you a few words of advice; don’t be too crazy. If you wager too heavily, you might end up losing yourself.” The short elder turned his head and left.

Ning looked at Yu Qi. “1,300,000 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence?”

“Right.” Yu Qi nodded.

“Fine.” Ning laughed. He couldn’t be bothered with the interactions between the two; what mattered was getting the liquefied elemental essence into his hands.

Moments later, the two carried out their trade. The treasures went to Yu Qi, while Ning acquired the 1,300,000 kilograms, as well as a Xia insignia. This represented that Ning was like most Loose Immortals, qualified to purchase magic treasures at a 40% discount.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning.” After having completed the transaction, Yu Qi’s face was ruddy with excitement. “It’s almost night. At nightfall, the monthly Treasure Auction will begin.”

“Treasure Auction?” Ning nodded, but didn’t look too interested.

“This is the Treasure Auction of the main headquarters of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. The major powers of this world, and in fact many lone wanderer Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals will deliver their treasures to this Treasure Auction,” Yu Qi said. “In fact, even Immortal-ranked magic treasures might appear, along with many other hard-to-purchase items. If you have time, you should make an appearance at the

Treasure Auction.”

Ning was intrigued. It was worth a visit; perhaps he might find essence extracts of the Five Elements. He immediately said, “Will members of the Youngflame clan participate?”

“The Youngflame clan? That’s a major clan; they will definitely send someone to participate in the monthly auction,” Yu Qi said.

“Good. Tonight, I’ll pay a visit.” Ning nodded.

The imperial capital of the Grand Xia. Within King Yan’s estate.

Anyone conferred the title of ‘King’ was definitely someone who had an extremely high status within the imperial Xiamang clan. After all, the Xiamang clan had existed for countless years; as the chief of this major world, they had countless offspring, but extremely few who would receive the title of ‘King’.

“Princess, Princess!” An armored female soldier charged towards a residence.

“You can come up.”

There were two stories to this residence. On the second floor, a green-robed woman was seated, against the railing, staring at the garden below. The garden was filled with some stones, sand, and even had a small lake; it looked just like a little beach.

“Princess.” The female soldier fell to one knee.

The green-robed woman seemed a bit fragile and weak, but the look in her eyes caused the female soldier to feel dread. The green-robed woman said calmly, “Speak. What is it.”

“A report from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain,” the female soldier said.

“The Heavenly Treasures Mountain?” The green-robed woman was startled, then immediately said, “Hand it over.”

“Alright.” The armored female soldier immediately offered the report over.

The green-robed woman accepted it, then opened it. Upon seeing the details regarding Ji Ning within the scroll, she couldn't help but tremble, then murmur to herself, "Ji Ning? Came to the imperial capital of the Grand Xia? Is at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain?"

Plop.

A single tear suddenly fell down onto the scroll.

Only now did the green-robed woman suddenly seem to come to her senses.

"Hahahahaha..." The green-robed woman suddenly began to laugh. She immediately rose to her feet, then shouted, "Transmit my orders. The Golden Imperials are to prepare to accompany me to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain."

"You are summoning the Golden Imperials?" The armored female soldier was stunned.

"Why haven't you gone yet?!" The green-robed woman snapped at her.

"Right away." The armored female soldier didn't dare to hesitate; she immediately departed.

As for the green-robed woman, she excitedly paced back and forth within the residence, her body trembling slightly as she murmured to herself, "The only child left behind by Aunt...my little cousin, my one and only little cousin...you've finally arrived. I, your big sister, am finally going to see you. Finally. I definitely won't let the Youngflame clan harm a hair on your head. Definitely not!"

"Princess." The voice of a female soldier, calling from outside.

The green-robed woman turned her head, and then her body flickered as she flew out gracefully.

Soon, a carriage that was completely wreathed in golden flames and which was pulled by two enormous azure phoenixes flew out. In front and behind the carriage was a crowd of Golden Imperials, all of whom had heroic, vigorous auras and who seemed to move as one. Clouds naturally

manifested in the area around them, and the Golden Imperials all flew forward, striding on the clouds.

“Azure phoenixes, to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain,” the green-robed woman said, seated within the carriage.

“Yes, Princess.” One of the azure phoenixes spoke out in the human tongue. Immediately afterwards, the two phoenixes began to pull the carriage forward. Escorted by the Golden Imperials, they immediately flew towards the main Heavenly Treasures Mountain.

Chapter 13: Dharmic Decree

Escorted by a ring of Golden Imperials, the azure phoenixes pulled the Immortal carriage to the main Heavenly Treasures Mountain. As they arrived, the Heavenly Treasures Mountain proactively sent someone out to welcome them; after all, this was the exalted Princess Xiyue of King Yan's estate.

"Little sister Xiyue." A white-robed, fairy-like maiden with an extraordinary aura that stuck out from the crowd went to welcome her.

"Elder sister Azurewillow." Princess Xiyue emerged from the Immortal carriage, revealing a smile.

"Little sister Xiyue, why have you come to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain? You come here quite rarely. I was planning to go visit you in a few days," the white-robed maiden, Azurewillow, laughed. Fairy Azurewillow...she was a reincarnated female Immortal, and in the past, she had been a Loose Immortal of the Skyfarmer clan. After reincarnating, she had once more been reborn into the Skyfarmer clan!

Azurewillow, a Primal Daoist, was an extremely high ranking member of the main headquarters of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, and a very close friend of Princess Xiyue's.

"I wanted to come and take a look, so I did." Princess Xiyue and Azurewillow linked arms together. Clouds emerged beneath their feet, leading them forward towards a particularly wide hallway. Most ordinary guests, such as Ning, entered through an ordinary hallway.

"You should've come a long time ago. You always stay cooped up within the king's estate. Don't you feel stifled there? I feel stifled for you!" Azurewillow felt that this good friend of hers, Princess Xiyue, was excellent in all areas save for one; she was a bit too solitary. When the younger generation members of the various major clans located in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia met together, they would often discuss Princess Xiyue.

There were simply too many imperial descendants, and so 'princes' and

‘princesses’ had varying levels of status. King Yan, however, only had a single family member, Princess Xiyue, and so he doted heavily on her. Thus, her own status naturally became extremely high as well.

Many people believed...that the reason why Princess Xiyue was so solitary was because of her childhood. This was because no one knew about what she had experienced as a child; all they knew was that when King Yan brought Princess Xiyue back, she was already a grown woman.

“Right. Help me look into something,” Princess Xiyue said. “Someone named Ji Ning should’ve come to your Heavenly Treasures Mountain. Help me investigate and see where this Ji Ning is currently located? He should still be within your Heavenly Treasures Mountain.”

“Fine.” Azurewillow smiled, then stretched her divine sense out a few hundred kilometers, giving the instructions to a subordinate.

“It seems, Xiyue, that you came because of this Ji Ning. Ji Ning...the only person of this name that I can think of is that disciple of the Black-White College of Stillwater Province, who killed Youngflame Nong,” Azurewillow said.

“That’s the one.” Princess Xiyue revealed a smile as well. “I’m quite curious about him. He actually dared to kill Youngflame Nong.”

“I’m quite intrigued by him as well,” Azurewillow said.

Moments later.

“Found him.” Azurewillow said, “Ji Ning is at Fortunes Peak.”

“Fortunes Peak? Then let’s go to Fortunes Peak,” Princess Xiyue said directly.

The main Heavenly Treasures Mountain took up an extremely large amount of space. There were many mountain peaks within it, and the top of the mountain peaks appeared like the scales of an enormous kirin. Amongst them, there were nine peaks that were jointly referred to as the Fortunes Peaks. Every single one of them had hundreds of estates floating around them, all of which were surrounded by clouds. The dense clouds were more than thirty meters thick, forming into streets and traversed by

carriages and maidservants.

Ning was seated in the lotus position atop one particular cloudbank, eating delicacies with Uncle White and Little Qing by his side, along with a maidservant who was awaiting his instructions.

Whoosh.

A ripple in the air above the mountain peak. Azurewillow and Princess Xiyue flew out together, landing atop a cloud. Both sat down, and instantly, maidservants came to deliver delicacies to them.

“Look. That’s Ji Ning, right over there.” Azurewillow gave Ning a glance.

Princess Xiyue followed Azurewillow’s gaze, quickly discovering that in that direction, there were quite a few clouds at various different levels, upon which were seated various guests. In fact, some of them were extremely respected, high-status members of the Grand Xia Dynasty, and they voluntarily smiled towards Azurewillow and Princess Xiyue.

“Eh?” Princess Xiyue quickly discovered that amongst the guests, there was a very ordinary-looking fur-clad youth. This youth was almost completely absorbed in his eating, and by his side was a snowy white hound and an azure serpent, both of whom were eating as well while chatting about how ‘this one tastes great’ or ‘the imperial capital lives up to its reputation’ or ‘I never tasted this in Stillwater Commandery’ or ‘we certainly came to the right place, master!’

“Ji Ning.” Princess Xiyue looked towards the distant Ning, a warm feeling in her heart. “They look so similar. He looks just like father!” Princess Xiyue murmured quietly to herself.

Ning’s appearance was more like that of his mother, Yuchi Snow. Yuchi Snow and Yuchi Mount, in turn, were actual siblings...as the saying goes, a boy will look more like his maternal uncles. Ning did indeed have many facial similarities to his uncle, Yuchi Mount. However, because Ning broke through to the Xiantian level quite early on, he had always looked just as he had when he was a youth. If he had made his breakthrough a few years later...given how tall he already was at age eleven, by age sixteen, he would’ve been quite massive and muscular.

“Little brother.” Princess Xiyue felt warmth in her heart, and her eyes couldn’t help but begin to glisten.

It had been far too long.

She had always been by herself. Even after her grandfather had found her and brought her back to the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, she was still very lonely. She dearly missed her departed mother, and her father, who would never return...every night, in her dreams, she would return to the warm, happy days she had spent with her parents on that island.

She wanted to return to that island, to go back to the life of a fisherman’s daughter. Unfortunately...there was no way to ever go back.

Her father’s life-tablet had already shattered. She had thought that she would never have any other family members...but Youngflame Nong’s death was discovered to have involved a youth, a youth whose mother was named Yuchi Snow, a youth who was supposedly a ‘spawn of the Yuchi clan’. Yuchi Snow...although she had never met this woman, she had heard her father speak of her. That was the one and only surviving little sister of her father’s.

“Little brother.” Princess Xiyue had been quite frantic earlier, but upon seeing that youth, seated atop the clouds, be eating and chatting with his two spirit-beasts, the Whitewater Hound and the Azure Skysnake, she no longer felt frantic.

“Xiyue. Tonight is the night of the monthly Treasure Auction,” Fairy Azurewillow said with a laugh. “And I heard some news regarding this Ji Ning.”

“What is it?” Princess Xiyue, upon hearing the words ‘Ji Ning’, instantly felt curious.

Azurewillow said, “Ji Ning originally wasn’t very interested in the Treasure Auction, but upon hearing that the forces of the Youngflame clan would also be present, he came.”

“Ah?!” Princess Xiyue was amazed. “What’s he going to do?”

“Ji Ning came without changing his appearance. He also brought his spirit-beasts and rode on the carriage Youngflame Nong had owned, straight into the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. It’s as though he was afraid the Youngflame clan wouldn’t realize he was here.” Azurewillow sighed, “In fact, upon hearing that the Youngflame clan would attend, he insisted on attending as well. I feel as though he is setting himself directly against the Youngflame clan. I must say, he truly is quite audacious.”

“Isn’t he in great danger?” Princess Xiyue said hurriedly.

“This Ji Ning has acquired the treasures of the Youngflame clan; he definitely must have quite a few protective treasures,” Azurewillow said. “And...for him to be capable of killing Youngflame Nong means that he is an extraordinary figure. Given his power, it will actually be quite hard for the Youngflame to kill him in the imperial capital.”

Princess Xiyue quickly returned to a clear-minded state. She nodded. “Right. The Imperial Guard maintain a constant watch over the entire imperial capital. Once battle begins, they’ll quickly teleport over.”

“Right. So, if the Youngflame clan wishes to kill Ji Ning, they’ll probably have to send Deathsworn, and a Deathsworn capable of killing him in a single breath at that. Finding this sort of Deathsworn...” Azurewillow shook her head. “Hard. Very hard. He’d have to be a supreme Loose Immortal at the very least, but most likely, even a supreme Loose Immortal wouldn’t necessarily be able to kill him within a single breath. After all, Ji Ning has already displayed prowess in battle sufficient to kill Youngflame Nong and a Primal-level Fiendgod.”

Princess Xiyue laughed as well. She suddenly felt a sense of pride for this cousin of her’s; her cousin truly was formidable.

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It was already late at night. Stars had appeared in the night sky. The starlight linked together, creating rays of starlight. A tall, thin, narrow-eyed old man was taking a stroll through the skies, surrounded by starlight. It was Patriarch Arcanum.

Beneath him was a quiet, secluded mountain range.

“Floatcloud.” Patriarch Arcanum spoke out, and his voice instantly echoed out, passing through the mountains.

Soon, a figure emerged from within the mountains. It was a bald old man. Upon seeing Patriarch Arcanum, the bald old man immediately bowed with respect. “Floatcloud pays his respects to the Patriarch.”

“Mmm. How many years have you trained for?” Patriarch Arcanum asked calmly.

“It has already been 128,113 years,” the bald elder said respectfully.

“Not bad. Every hundred thousand years constitutes a major accomplishment; many Loose Immortals are unable to make it past a hundred thousand years,” Patriarch Arcanum said.

The bald elder said hurriedly, “When I faced the tribulation that year, my Primal base was damaged. It was all thanks to the help of the tribe that I was able to restore my base quickly, which allowed me to survive until now. However...I’m almost at my limit. Each trial and tribulation poses a major threat to me. I want to reincarnate, but I’m afraid that I will fail in doing so.”

Reincarnation wouldn’t necessarily be successful; if one was lucky, one might succeed, but there were also those who would fail. The Netherworld Kingdom, after all, was not a kind, gentle place.

“I can bestow a dharmic decree of reincarnation unto you,” Patriarch Arcanum said.

“A dharmic decree of reincarnation?” The bald elder instantly revealed a look of surprise and joy.

Dharmic decrees were decrees which were issued by major powers of the Three Realms. Even the Netherworld Kingdom would give face to the dharmic decrees of major powers. Even for the Youngflame clan, such decrees were extremely precious. After all, there were far too many Loose Immortals; the entire Youngflame clan had in excess of a thousand Loose Immortals.

“I need you to accomplish something,” Patriarch Arcanum said.

“Please instruct me, Patriarch,” the bald elder said hurriedly. He had begged the clan repeatedly in the past, but the clan had not given him a dharmic decree of reincarnation. Now that the Patriarch had come in person and said that he would bestow a dharmic decree of reincarnation... this must involve a major affair.

“You know that Ji Ning killed my child, Nong?” Patriarch Arcanum said calmly.

“I do,” the bald elder said hurriedly. How could he not know? Youngflame Nong had been all but guaranteed to be the next Godplume Duke, and had a Fiendgod bodyguard. In the Patriarch’s heart, his status had been far higher than that of Loose Immortal whose life was nearing its end.

“That Ji Ning is currently in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia.” Patriarch Arcanum instructed, “You are to go there and kill Ji Ning, then go reincarnate.”

“The imperial capital?” The bald elder’s face changed. Kill someone in the imperial capital? Kill Ji Ning?

This was no simple task. After all, Ji Ning was someone who had even managed to kill both Youngflame Nong and a Primal-level Fiendgod. Killing Ji Ning was very difficult, and to kill someone in the imperial capital was incredibly troublesome. If he wasn’t, even his soul would be captured and taken away by the Imperial Guard. Most likely, the end result would be that his soul would be shattered.

“I’ll give you time to prepare. Buy or trade for whatever treasures you need. However, I want you to kill Ji Ning within three days,” Patriarch Arcanum said coldly. At the same time, he produced a golden scroll in his hand. “This is the dharmic decree of reincarnation. If you swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens, I’ll give it to you.”

The bald elder hesitated, looking at the golden dharmic decree. He thought about the fact that he had quite a few treasures; he could sell them off and purchase a few particularly powerful items.

And...since Patriarch Arcanum had personally come, most likely, he had no choice but to accept.

“Let the Dao of the Heavens bear witness! I, Floatcloud, shall kill Ji Ning within three days, and will not reveal any information regarding the Youngflame clan. If I violate this oath, let my soul be shattered.” The bald elder gritted his teeth, then swore the oath.

“Very good.” Patriarch Arcanum nodded, then casually waved his hand, sending the golden scroll flying forward. The bald elder immediately caught it.

“I’ll give you three days...but the sooner the better.” After saying his part, Patriarch Arcanum took a single step, then disappeared within the countless stars of the night sky.

Chapter 14: First Encounter With Woodpass

The Heavenly Treasures Mountain. The clouds hovering around the nine peaks of the Fortunes Peaks. Atop the clouds were formidable figures from various areas around the world; this truly was a place where the fish swam with the dragons.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning.” A violet-robed Yu Qi had just arrived at Ning’s place.

“Oh?” Ning gave him a glance. Earlier, he had sold off treasures worth 1.3 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence to this man. Ning was quite satisfied with this. Smiling, he said, “Fellow Daoist Yu Qi, come, have a few cups of wine with me.”

“No need,” Yu Qi said with a laugh, then whispered, “I’ve come to inform you, fellow Daoist Ji Ning, that the men of the Youngflame clan have arrived.”

“The men of the Youngflame clan have arrived?” Ning’s eyes lit up. “Where?”

“Right? Where?” Little Qing’s eyes were shining as well.

Yu Qi was flabbergasted. When these two had heard the word ‘Youngflame clan’, it was as though they had located their prey.

“Right over there.” Yu Qi gestured with his eyes as he gave a sideways glance to a distant mountain peak. “See them? That group that just flew out from that mountain peak. Including the maid, there are nine in total.”

Ning immediately followed Yu Qi’s gave. Right away, he saw the group of people flying out; the group was led by a middle-aged man with an extraordinary aura and loose, unbound long hair. By his side were two youths. As for the others with him, they were all guards, servants, and maids.

“Youngflame Xiushui?” Ning’s eyes narrowed. After having sold off the

magic treasures, Ning had purchased quite a few intelligence reports, such as a detailed one regarding the Youngflame clan and the various other powers of the imperial capital. In short, Ning had already memorized all of the fairly formidable figures of the Youngflame clan that had been mentioned in the intelligence reports.

Youngflame Xiushui was a Void-level Earth Immortal! He was being nurtured by the Youngflame clan, and had a good chance of becoming a Celestial Immortal. In fact, his position was such that he couldn't even be bothered to become a Godplume Duke. This was because, for one who had a true chance of becoming a Celestial Immortal, there was generally no time to take care of various clan matters.

Becoming the Godplume Duke meant that one would have to carry out many matters and divide one's attention.

"You recognize him?" Yu Qi laughed softly. "This is Youngflame Xiushui with his son, Youngflame Jun. They've invited Adept Woodpass of the Southern Seas to be their guest for dinner."

"They've invited Adept Woodpass?" Ning said, puzzled, "Youngflame Xiushui has an extraordinary status; he's actually inviting a Wanxiang Adept to dinner, and one from the Southern Seas?"

Yu Qi laughed. "Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, you don't understand; the Southern Seas are incomparably vast and difficult to govern. Thus, the battles between the cultivators in that area are extremely chaotic and ferocious. However, this chaotic region has given birth to some truly outstanding geniuses. Adept Woodpass can be described as one of the most supreme of Wanxiang Adepts of this place."

"Most supreme?" Ning was shocked.

The Southern Seas...that was a place of endless water, with many islands and cultivators, that was comparable in size to several commanderies. To describe someone as being one of the most supreme of Wanxiang Adepts in this place was quite the boast.

"Adept Woodpass is one of those who have come to the Conclave of Immortal Destiny in order to fight for first place," Yu Qi said softly.

“Three hundred years ago, Adept Woodpass was already capable of executing a Primal Daoist.”

“He killed a Primal Daoist more than three centuries ago?” Ning was greatly shocked.

“This Woodpass...for the sake of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, he managed to force himself to remain at the Wanxiang Adept level for three centuries?” The nearby Little Qing called out in shock, “I’ve heard of freaks like him, but I didn’t expect to actually run into one.”

Fortunately, every single cloud was surrounded by formations which blocked out sound.

Ning still felt his heart clench. He had killed Primal Daoists three hundred years ago? Then how powerful must he now be?

“Adept Woodpass is extremely famous,” Yu Qi said hurriedly. “Two hundred years ago, he produced his Primaltwin.”

“Primaltwin...” Ning silently memorized this.

“A few decades ago, his Primaltwin actually trained all the way to the Void level, becoming an Earth Immortal!” Yu Qi said. “He took over an island in the Southern Seas and often expounds on the Dao there, turning away neither monsters nor humans. He often expounds on the Dao, causing his fame to grow greater and greater...and, according to what the outside world knows, more than six Loose Immortals have died to him already!”

Ji Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing were completely stunned upon hearing this.

“What a madman! His true body is only at the Wanxiang Adept level, but his Primaltwin actually dared to train to the Void level and become an Earth Immortal?” Little Qing called out in shock. “Three hundred years... isn’t he afraid of the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations?”

“To dare to act in such an insane manner...either he’s a madman, or he’s an absolute, peerless monster,” Ning said.

It was actually incredibly dangerous for a Primaltwin to train to the Void level and become an Earth Immortal when the true body was a Wanxiang Adept. This was because once a Calamity or a Tribulation descended, the power of the trial would be linked to one's own power. How terrifying would a Calamity or a Tribulation meant for an Earth Immortal be? The terrifying trial would simultaneously descend on both the true body and the Primaltwin. The Primaltwin might make it, but if the original body was too weak, it might not be able to do so.

"The Primaltwin of Adept Woodpass broke through to the Earth Immortal level a few decades ago; it's possible that he had already overcome his Calamity at that time," Yu Qi said with a laugh. "I refuse to believe that his true Wanxiang-level body is capable of overcoming a trial meant for a Void-level Earth Immortal."

"Right." Ning nodded. That made sense.

"However, Adept Woodpass truly is at a high level of comprehension. He dares to publicly expound on the Dao, and the outside world knows of at least six Loose Immortals who died to him...in the imperial capital, he is publicly acknowledged as one of the contenders for the number one position." Yu Qi sighed, "He's already so formidable; if his true body becomes apprenticed to one of the major powers of the Three Realms and learns even higher level techniques and divine abilities, it will definitely become far more powerful than even his Primaltwin."

"Fellow Daoist Yu Qi," Ning said hurriedly, "Regarding this Conclave of Immortal Destiny...there should be intelligence reports regarding some publicly acknowledged formidable figures, right?"

"Right." Yu Qi nodded. "However, just some of the more famous ones; after all, the Grand Xia Empire is simply too vast. No one knows about all of the monstrous geniuses that are hidden within it. For example, yourself, fellow Daoist Ji Ning. Before you killed Youngflame Nong, no one in the imperial capital had ever even heard of you."

"The Grand Xia Empire is a place of crouching tigers and hidden dragons. Adept Woodpass is just one of the most likely contenders, but no

one knows if an even more terrifying genius might emerge.” Yu Qi sighed with great emotion.

Ning nodded as well. “I need the intelligence reports regarding this Conclave of Immortal Destiny and some formidable Wanxiang Adepts participating in it.”

“I’ll deliver it shortly,” Yu Qi said with a laugh, then departed.

Still seated atop the cloud, Ji Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing all felt as though this Conclave of Immortal Destiny wouldn’t be an easy one to win.

“Even his Primaltwin is a Void-level Earth Immortal...and yet he insists on shamelessly keeping his true body at the ‘Wanxiang’ level,” Little Qing grumbled viciously.

“Well, he wants to be apprenticed to a truly formidable figure of the Three Realms,” Ning said with a laugh. “It makes sense.” As the saying went, a teacher could lead you through the door, but training relied on one’s self.

Although training did indeed rely on one’s self, one still needed a teacher to at least lead one through the door. If one had a good teacher, the situation would be completely different. Although Ning had never met Daoist Threelives, given that Daoist Threelives had arranged the ‘Divine Abilities Hall’, ‘Wargod Hall’, and ‘Stellar Hall’ for him, it was as though Daoist Threelives was personally guiding him.

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In another area.

“Since our last parting in the Southern Seas, it has been more than a century. Now, fellow Daoist, you have come to the imperial capital, hahaha...” The long-haired Youngflame Xiushui laughed with emotion. “When I think about how how you will display your divine might in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, and about how some of the major powers of the Three Realms will discover you and perhaps accept you as disciple...I can’t help but feel jealous of you. I feel as though I should’ve

stayed a few more years at the Wanxiang level as well.”

Adept Woodpass looked like a youth; he had a simple, honest appearance. But this simple, honest-looking youth was known throughout the Southern Seas. He had travelled alone, establishing a tremendous reputation, and openly gave lectures on the Dao. He was venerated by countless Immortal cultivators and Diremonsters.

“Fellow Daoist Xiushui, you don’t understand; to stay at the Wanxiang Adept level is incredibly miserable,” Adept Woodpass said with a sigh. “My true body’s foundation is far more powerful than that of my Primaltwin’s; after all, my Primaltwin is only a Ki Refiner, while my true body is primarily a Fiendgod Body Refiner. And yet, I keep on refraining from breaking through. After having done so for so long...it’s actually cast a shadow over my heart. In the recent Calamity, when my Primaltwin was at the peak Primal level, the mental attacks were exceptionally powerful. I almost died due to the blandishments of the mental attacks.”

Youngflame Xiushui nodded. “Others only see your gloriousness and see you shine with power at the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, but they don’t see how you’ve gritted your teeth and endured the passage of the past three centuries. The shadow cast over your heart by three centuries of forcibly repressing your power...how terrifying it must be!”

“Father.” A handsome youth next to them suddenly called out. Youngflame Xiushui looked towards his son.

“Should I wait for three centuries as well?” The handsome youth asked.

“You? Even if you wait three centuries, you have no hope. Focus on your training. If you are able to become a Void-level Earth Immortal, I’d have to thank the heavens and thank the earth.” Youngflame Xiushui shook his head in resignation. His son, at his level of ability, wanted to participate in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny? In the past, even Xiushui himself had chosen to give up. There were countless monsters who had been suppressing their own power for years, waiting for this chance to soar to the heavens during the Conclave.

The handsome youth pursed his lips. Although he too had participated

in the conversation between his father and Adept Woodpass, he was clearly on a lower level...and so, bored, he looked around. Suddenly, his gaze fell upon a distant cloud. Atop the cloud there was a fur-clad youth, a snowy white dog, and an azure-robed maiden. The fur-clad youth was actually holding a book and reading it.

“Is he...?” The handsome youth stared, wide-eyed. “...Ji Ning?”

“Father, Father, quick, look.” The handsome youth immediately called out.

Youngflame Xiushui frowned as he looked at his son. His son had interrupted him while he was speaking; clearly, he was rather displeased.

“Quick, look. Ji Ning. That’s Ji Ning, who killed Youngflame Nong.” The handsome youth pointed towards Ning’s direction.

Youngflame Xiushui and Adept Woodpass both looked in that direction. They immediately saw the distant, fur-clad youth.

“His appearance, his clothes...and he has a Whitewater Hound and an azure-robed maiden by his side. Can that really be Ji Ning?” Youngflame Xiushui frowned. The Youngflame clan had been pursuing Ji Ning this entire time...however, they wouldn’t bother Youngflame Xiushui over a matter like this. Still, in his heart, he felt proud of his clan, and naturally wouldn’t permit outsiders to challenge it.

“Can that really be him?” Youngflame Xiushui said softly, “He dares to come to the imperial capital...what is Ji Ning planning? To challenge my Youngflame clan?”

Adept Woodpass looked over as well, then laughed. “I heard that Ji Ning is quite formidable. Can it be that he, too, has come to participate in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny?”

Chapter 15: Desiring Fame at the Treasure Auction

“Him?” Youngflame Xiushui shook his head. “He’s only trained for thirty short years. To try to shock everyone at the Conclave of Immortal Destiny before he’s truly established his foundation of power? He’d just be dreaming.”

Next to him, his son said while grinding his teeth, “Father, Ji Ning rose to fame by stepping on our Youngflame clan. For the sake of our clan’s reputation alone, we should kill him.”

“That’s none of your concern.” Youngflame Xiushui glanced at his son.

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As Youngflame Xiushui, Adept Woodpass, Princess Xiyue, and Fairy Azurewillow were all paying attention to Ning, the number of guests at the Fortune Peaks had continued to steadily grow. These guests had all come here to participate in the Treasure Auction. Amongst them, there was a bald elder. He walked by himself to a cloud, then sat down in the lotus position.

“Ji Ning?” The bald elder gave Ning, seated on a distant cloud around a different mountain, a sidelong glance.

“If I kill Ji Ning, I’ll then reincarnate. If I can’t kill him, then my soul will be shattered.” The bald elder was Immortal Floatcloud, who had been given the mission by Patriarch Arcanum. Although he had been away from the imperial capital for more than ten thousand years, and very few people in the capital were even capable of recognizing him, Immortal Floatcloud had still changed his appearances and pulled in his aura.

Immortal Floatcloud stood there. Although he was drinking wine quite casually, he had chosen the perfect spot; from the corner of his eyes, he could pay clear attention to Ning’s actions.

“The main headquarters of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. There are layers of protective spells here, and many Immortals on guard. To kill Ji

Ning within the Heavenly Treasures Mountain...unlikely!” Immortal Floatcloud pondered on what to do. Actually, he wanted to walk right over to Ning, quickly kill him, then immediately self-detonate and go reincarnate. But he knew quite well...

As soon as he attacked, in the blink of an eye the formations of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain would activate. There was almost no chance he would be able to kill Ji Ning.

“I’ll wait until he leaves the Heavenly Treasures Mountain headquarters. Once he goes out, on the outside streets...” Immortal Floatcloud continued to ponder. “There will be no restrictive formations there. I can make my move then! As for the Imperial Guards, although they will arrive very quickly, it’ll still take them a bit of time.”

“I’ll let you live a little while longer.” Immortal Floatcloud’s Dao-heart was currently filled with the utmost resolve. There were no contradictory thoughts in his mind at all. He had only one thought – to kill Ji Ning, then reincarnate!

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Ning was carefully reading through the intelligence report which Yu Qi had brought. This report detailed all of the more famous Wanxiang Adepts of the entire imperial capital. Indeed, there were several individuals who were publicly acclaimed as having the highest chances of success in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny. There was Xiamang Zishan of the imperial clan, Cangwu Jiu of the Cangwu clan, Xiangtian Xiao of the Xiangtian clan, Youngflame Xuan of the Youngflame clan, Adept Woodpass of the Southern Seas, Adept Redbamboo of the Eastern Seas...

These individuals all had enormous reputations, and were publicly acclaimed as the most supreme of Wanxiang Adepts.

Although the likes of the Sloppy Daoist of the Black-White College were also recorded within the book, they were clearly ranked towards the lower end. The Sloppy Daoist could only be considered one of the supreme Wanxiang Adepts of Stillwater Commandery. Adept Woodpass, Cangwu Jiu, and the others listed in the front, however, were the most supreme of

this entire major world.

“I’m actually in this as well?” Ning flipped through, then laughed. “My main battle accomplishment is actually the killing of Youngflame Nong and a Primal-level Fiendgod.” If he hadn’t killed Youngflame Nong and his servant, given how short Ning’s period of training had been, he logically wouldn’t have emerged in this intelligence report at all.

Suddenly, the maidservant who had been standing behind him moved forward. Ning turned to look at her. She smiled and said, “Adept, the Treasure Auction is about to begin. Are you going to participate? If you are, please hand over five thousand kilograms as your deposit; if you are not, then you will have to leave.”

“Participating in the Treasure Auction requires a deposit?” Ning said, surprised, “And five thousand kilograms?”

“This is the requirement of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain headquarters,” the maidservant explained. “Ordinary Treasure Auctions don’t require deposits, but the monthly Treasure Auction held by the headquarters is an auction with treasures collected from throughout the Grand Xia Empire, and even some other major worlds. Generally speaking, there will be extremely valuable treasures present that are extremely rare and precious. To prevent customers from making random bids they cannot or will not honor, there is a need to put in a deposit of five thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. If someone makes a bid but doesn’t honor it, then we will punish them by taking away the five thousand kilograms.”

Ning nodded.

“Also, the five thousand kilograms is non-refundable,” the maidservant said. “Adept, you can use it to buy whatever treasures you like during the Treasure Auction. In the end, we will deduct the five thousand kilograms from your total bill.”

“It seems all participants in the Treasure Auction, no matter what, must pay at least five thousand kilograms...” Ning swept the area with his gaze. “There are more than a thousand customers present. The amount of

liquefied elemental essence will be at a minimum of five million kilograms.”

“We have prepared many treasures as well,” the maid said.

“Mm.” Ning nodded, then tossed out an elemental talisman he had acquired earlier when selling his treasures. The maid accepted it, then stepped backwards once more.

Atop the Treasures Peaks, the clouds were filled with maids chatting with their customers. Some customers left, but quite a few remained. In fact, there were some latecomers as well who had clearly arrived just for the Treasure Auction.

“Youngflame clan.” Ji Ning stared towards the distant Youngflame Xiushui. “It seems they’ve discovered me as well. Hmph. The reason I came to the imperial capital was to make more people know about me. The more, the better.”

The reason why Ning had come so openly and in full ‘regalia’ was to become famous! The Youngflame clan had been frantically searching for him and knew about his whereabouts. However, the enemies of the Youngflame clan such as the Kindwater clan, their most powerful enemy, probably didn’t know about Ning’s arrival yet. So...what he wanted to do was to make himself famous! To make all the customers at the Treasure Auction spread word of his arrival.

“When the major powers of the Grand Xia’s imperial capital all know that I am here...those who wish to befriend me will probably seek me out.” Ning knew quite well that fighting against the Youngflame clan by himself would be extremely taxing. He needed a bit of outside support! Thus, he needed to become famous! It would be even better if his name became spread throughout the imperial capital!

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Moments later. An enormous, rainbow-colored cloud soared into the skies, with a black-haired maiden standing atop it. Riding the cloud, she flew directly towards the air in the center of the nine peaks of the Fortune Peaks.

“Everyone.” The black-haired maiden laughed, spinning around and curtsying in each direction. “The time has come once more for the monthly Treasure Auction. This Treasure Auction shall be administered by myself, Feathervoid. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain has prepared, in total, 1360 treasures, each of which are extraordinary. They all have their own unique attributes, and many of them come from hidden areas. Some even come from dangerous areas that are elsewhere in the Three Realms, or even beyond the Three Realms.”

“Same as always; aside from the treasures which our Heavenly Treasures Mountain is selling off, all the customers present who possess treasures they wish to auction off can do so, after an examination by us. The Treasure Auction itself will only charge a commission of 5%, capped off at five thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.”

“Alright, enough with the small talk. Let’s begin with the first item of this Treasure Auction.”

The long black-haired maiden waved her hand, and a golden set of drums suddenly appeared in the air, wafting out with ripples of power.

“Battlesoul Drums, Heaven-ranked magic treasure. It can be used to wound enemies, and it can also be used to make thousands of your Dao-soldiers unleash extraordinary combat power. Reserve price of five thousand kilograms! Each bid has to be at least five hundred kilograms higher,” the black-haired maiden said with a laugh.

“5500 kilograms.”

“6000 kilograms.”

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The formidable figures who had come to attend the Treasure Auction all began to make their bids, purchasing one treasure after another. Those who had the money to put down 5000 kilogram deposits were all extraordinary cultivators. Ordinary Primal Daoists wouldn’t be willing to spare a deposit of such size.

Ning sat there, drinking and watching leisurely.

“Master, aren’t you going to act yet?” Little Qing felt her blood boil as she watched the Treasure Auction go on. She was incomparably excited.

“Don’t be impatient,” Ning said. “The Youngflame clan hasn’t acted; why should I be in a rush? And in addition, there aren’t any treasures that I deeply desire either.”

The treasures which Ning had sold off were virtually all from either the Witchriver Immortal Estate or from Youngflame Nong. As for the truly exquisite items left behind by Immortal Juhua, Ning was holding them back and in no rush to sell! After having been ‘baptized’ by going through the treasures of Youngflame Nong, Immortal Witchriver, Immortal Juhua, and the underwater estate, Ning now had very high standards.

“This next treasure is a formation diagram! This formation diagram belonged to the Crab-Tortoise Immortal Duo. These two old Celestial Immortal Diremonsters made them as part of a game. I imagine that you all know that the Crab-Tortoise Immortal Duo had received a legacy from a major power of the Three Realms, and are exceptionally skilled in the Dao of Formations. Although this was nothing more than a toy to these two Celestial Immortals, it is still quite extraordinary, and contains many profound mysteries regarding formations. The Crab-Tortoise Immortal Duo once said...anyone who completely comprehends this formation diagram can be considered a grandmaster of formations.” The black-haired maiden laughed, “This formation diagram will start at a minimum price of 25,000 kilograms. Everyone, place your bids.”

“The Crab-Tortoise Immortal Duo?” Everyone began to discuss this. As for Ning and Uncle White, their eyes lit up as well.

The Whitewater Hound was completely focused on the Dao of Formations. Ning had a certain degree of understanding regarding formations as well. Naturally, the two knew of the Crab-Tortoise Immortal Duo. The Crab-Tortoise Immortal Duo were two figures out of legends. Both were Celestial Immortal Diremonsters...and they could be said to have the highest level of comprehension regarding formations, here in the major world of the Grand Xia Empire. In addition, it was said that they were apprentices to a truly major power of the Three Realms.

“Nothing more than a toy to them...if this was the essence of their knowledge, then the price would definitely not be a mere 25,000 kilograms.” Ning gave the nearby Uncle White a glance; clearly, Uncle White was rather eager and excited.

As someone who walked the Dao of Formations, he was naturally filled with eagerness towards this formation diagram.

“25,500 kilograms.”

“30,000 kilograms.”

The price of this formation diagram quickly skyrocketed. Although the Dao of Formations was an extremely complex and difficult one which very few truly supreme geniuses would embark on, there were still some people who knew that they had no hopes of becoming a Celestial Immortal and who would thus focus their efforts on formations. Formation grandmasters were quite terrifying, and in fact there were even some Celestial Immortals who relied on formations as well.

Still, the Dao of Formations was a bitter, tough Dao to follow. A single formation diagram wouldn't rise to an excessive price.

“40,000 kilograms.” Youngflame Xiushui finally spoke out. This was already quite a high price. Those who had come to the treasure auction were all quite level-headed, and wouldn't bid randomly.

“Any higher bids?” The black-haired maiden swept her gaze towards the surrounding area.

Suddenly...

Ning, who had yet to make a bid yet, suddenly spoke out. “42,500 kilograms!” He had immediately raised the price by 2500 kilograms, and it had already been at quite a high price.

The black-haired maiden glanced over, revealing a smile. “42,500 kilograms. Any higher?”

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The guests seated on the clouds surrounding the various peaks all

looked over, curious as to who the bidder was.

“Oh? A fur-clad youth? A Whitewater Hound? An Azure Skysnake?” Ning, for the sake of making himself more recognizable, had Little Qing revert to her Azure Skysnake form.

“That fur-clad youth...is he Ji Ning, who was said to have killed Youngflame Nong?”

“Who is Ji Ning?”

“Youngflame Nong, the next Godplume Duke of the imperial capital’s Youngflame clan, was killed in Stillwater Commandery. Didn’t you hear about this? The person who killed him was Ji Ning! The one who just made the bid! Look at those two spirit-beasts next to him, and look at his appearance. There’s no mistaking it. It’s him.”

“He killed Youngflame Nong?”

“Ji Ning?”

“The previous bidder was Youngflame Xiushui of the Youngflame clan. Ji Ning is in a bidding war against Youngflame Xiushui!”

The many guests of the Fortunes Peaks were all focused on Ning now, and instantly, a buzz of conversation swept the area.

Youngflame Xiushui’s face became unsightly to look at. As for the nearby Youngflame Jun, his face turned red with anger. He ground his teeth, and it seemed as though his eyes were spitting fire. He called out loudly, “45,000 kilograms!”

Chapter 16: Peacock Plume

“45,000 kilograms!”

The rage-filled voice echoed through the entire Fortune Peaks, reverberating in the air. This caused quite a few guests to look over. From that rage-filled bid...they could tell that the Youngflame clan must have been truly enraged.

“You imbecile.” Atop the cloud. Youngflame Xiushui, upon hearing his son make the bid, couldn’t help but give his son a hard look. He shouted mentally at him, “Can’t you tell that Ji Ning wants to make a name for himself today? He’s dared to come to the imperial capital openly and without any disguises, and even came to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain headquarter to participate in the Treasure Auction and cause trouble for our Youngflame clan during the bidding. This is all because he wants to make a name for himself!”

“In Stillwater Commandery, even the Northmont clan would have to give our Youngflame clan face. But this isn’t Stillwater Commandery; this is the imperial capital. This isn’t a place where we can just do whatever we please. What he wants to do is make a name for himself and make everyone in the imperial capital know about him, Ji Ning! Later on, he will enter an opposing power, which will make it much harder for our Youngflame clan to act against him.”

Youngflame Xiushui looked at his son. “Earlier, we could’ve just ignored him, but now that you are in a bidding war against him...more and more people are going to know about him.”

“But, but I’ve already made a bid...how about, how about we stop bidding?” Youngflame Jun was beginning to panic.

“Since we’ve made a bid, we can’t lower our heads,” Youngflame Xiushui sent. “The more people are watching, the more careful we need to be not to lose face for our Youngflame clan. Don’t say anything else. Let me handle it.”

“Alright.” Youngflame Jun didn’t dare to say anything else.

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Ning, upon hearing a bid of '45,000 kilograms!' be called out, immediately laughed. This was as perfect as someone delivering a pillow to him, just as he was feeling drowsy. He wanted to make his name known!

"45,000 kilograms. Anything higher?" The black-haired maiden atop the cloud called out.

"If someone else was bidding, I'd just say forget about it. But, since it's the Youngflame clan that's bidding, then I, Ji Ning, refuse to back down. 47,500 kilograms!" Ji Ning's voice rang out as well, echoing within the nine peaks.

"So it really is Ji Ning!"

"Who is Ji Ning?"

"Ji Ning, who killed Youngflame Nong, is at the Treasure Auction?"

Although earlier a few guests had noticed Ning, they only made up a small part of the total people present. Now that Ning spoke out so challengingly...more and more people began to pay attention to him.

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"I KNEW he was trying to make himself known." Youngflame Xiushui's face was like ice. As for his son, Youngflame Jun, he didn't dare to make a single sound. He knew that his earlier bid had given Ning his opportunity.

"Little fellow from Stillwater Commandery, you actually want to struggle against my Youngflame clan?" Youngflame Xiushui said calmly, "50,000 kilograms."

"Hmph, if your Youngflame clan wants this formation diagram, then prepare a bit more liquefied elemental essence. 60,000 kilograms!" Ning once more spoke out.

Youngflame Xiushui's face sank. This was a formation diagram that was clearly only worth forty to fifty thousand kilograms, but the price had been forcibly uplifted. If he continued to bid, regardless of whether or not

he ended up acquiring the formation diagram, the Youngflame clan would still have 'lost'. This was because, even if they acquired it...they would've paid an excessive price for it. But if they didn't acquire it? It would be akin to having let Ning trample all over them.

"62,500 kilograms," Youngflame Xiushui growled.

"64,000 kilograms." Ning didn't increase the price too much this time.

"My Youngflame clan has plenty of formation diagrams like this. I'll let you have this one." Youngflame Xiushui felt as though something was wrong, and he immediately stopped bidding. "You have no skill in formations, but actually bid so much out of spite. How amusing."

"Hahaha, what's a mere 64,000 kilograms? It's nothing. Youngflame Nong, of your Youngflame clan, gifted me with millions of kilograms!" Ning's laugh rang out.

Youngflame Xiushui's face immediately sank. Actually, he knew very well that as soon as his son called out a bid of 45,000 kilograms, their side was going to suffer a loss no matter what. This was because Ji Ning's motivation was to make a name for himself! No matter what, Ning would definitely be able to achieve his goal.

At the price of 64,000 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, the formation diagram left behind by the Crab-Tortoise Immortal Duo was purchased by Ji Ning. And, in turn, Ji Ning attracted the attention of the vast majority of the guests present.

Those final words in particular, about how 'Youngflame Nong, of your Youngflame clan, gifted me with millions of kilograms', was simply too vicious and brutal. Virtually all of the guests present began to murmur amongst themselves.

"Millions of kilograms of liquefied elemental essence?"

"Youngflame Nong was one of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital; he had quite a few magic treasures on him. Now, all of them were taken away by Ji Ning at one go. I imagine he really does have several million kilograms now."

“I’m starting to wish I was the one who killed Youngflame Nong.”

“Millions of kilograms. That’s enough to buy even an Immortal-ranked magic treasure!”

Actually, although Youngflame Nong did indeed carry astonishingly valuable treasures on him, of his three most precious treasures, he had already used up two of them; the ‘Lock’ scroll and the black-and-white disc. The only one remaining was the Greater Teleportation Dao-seal, which was something that generally wasn’t even available on the market for those who had enough money to purchase it. Ning wasn’t willing to sell it.

Amongst the many guests. Princess Xiyue stared at Ning from afar, a hint of softness in her eyes. This look was the look one had when one looked at a kinsman.

“Xiyue, you are quite well-disposed towards Ji Ning?” Fairy Azurewillow laughed.

“Yes.” Princess Xiyue nodded.

“Want to bring him on as your groom?” Azurewillow teased.

“Don’t speak nonsense.” Princess Xiyue frowned as she snapped back in a soft voice. She viewed Ji Ning purely as a family member, as a little brother. What was this nonsense about marrying him?

“I have to admit though, this Ji Ning really is bold. He actually dares to go completely head-on against the Youngflame clan.” Fairy Azurewillow sighed. “He even said that Youngflame Nong gifted him with millions of kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. I imagine that when the Youngflame clan heard these words...I don’t even know how angry they must be right now.”

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Time flowed on. One treasure after another was auctioned off.

Nearly two hours later.

“Everyone.” The black-haired maiden’s voice suddenly went higher.

“Don’t just chat with your friends. This next treasure is the most valuable one this particular Treasure Auction has put up so far. This is truly a treasure which normally cannot be purchased. If you miss this chance, who knows if you’ll ever have another one?”

The many guests all immediately turned to look at her, curious.

Ning, curious, looked over as well. The most valuable treasure thus far? The highest bid for a treasure in this auction thus far had gone up to more than 150,000 kilograms.

“This is an ‘intrinsic magic treasure’, left behind by a peacock-type Godbeast from the Deva Realm after it died,” the black-haired maiden called out loudly. “And this peacock-type Godbeast had an incomparably pure lineage; even after it had reached the Void level, it was still unable to transform.”

“What?!” Ning, hearing this, was shocked. Unable to transform even after becoming a Void-level Earth Immortal? Could it be that it could only transform after becoming a Celestial Immortal? A Godbeast like this...he hadn’t even heard of such a creature in this world of the Grand Xia.

“This peacock-type Diremonster’s ‘intrinsic magic treasure’ consisted of five plumes.” The black-haired maiden waved her hand, and instantly, five peacock feathers appeared out of nowhere. These five peacock plumes hovered there, emanating a natural aura of might and power. One was wreathed by fire, one was wreathed by water, the third seemed to emanate an aura of infinite ponderance, the fourth howled with golden energy, and the fifth emanated a blurry, azure aura.

When the five plumes appeared, the surrounding space seemed to be immediately frozen.

“That is...!”

Instantly, a series of cries rang out from throughout the Treasure Auction area.

Peacocks were born from the Five Elements, and even amongst such

creatures, were the favored children of the heavens. Supposedly, the more pure the lineage of a peacock-type Godbeast was, the more dense and pure the Five Elements essence would be in their plumes. Some were capable of manifesting two plumes, others three. Only those with the most exquisite and pure of Godbeast lineages would be capable of forming five plumes!

A peacock Godbeast with such a pure lineage was definitely no weaker than a Fiendgod. A Void-level peacock Godbeast was most likely comparable to a Celestial Immortal!

“These five plumes it had were innately bestowed with the five elements,” the black-haired maiden said with a laugh. “Unfortunately, it was merely a Void-level Diremonster. If it had been a Diremonster at the Celestial Immortal level...the value of these five plumes would be truly high. Most likely, even Celestial Immortals would go mad for it. But of course, if this peacock Godbeast had become a Celestial Immortal, this plume wouldn’t appear in a place like this. In fact, there’s no way we would sell it.”

Everyone nodded. These five plumes were already incredibly precious; if the peacock had undergone the heavenly tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal, the value of its plumes would probably rise by thousands of times. Most likely, even the emperors of the major worlds would feel desire for it. However, a Celestial Immortal peacock Godbeast with such an exalted, rare, and pure bloodline would probably be comparable to an ordinary True Immortal. It wouldn’t easily perish.

“Although it was merely a Void-level Earth Immortal, given how exalted and noble its lineage was, and how its five plumes were divided into the Five Elements...if these plumes are used to forge a magic artifact, when a few other things are mixed in, they can absolutely produce an Immortal-ranked magic treasure. Normally, it would at least be a high-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure, but if you were lucky, you might even be able to produce a top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure,” the black-haired maiden said.

These five plumes were the ‘intrinsic magic treasures’ of the peacock-

type Godbeast. To humans, however, they could only be used for refining artifacts. As for making them into a top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure? That was just nonsense. Many other materials would be required, and the chances of success were virtually negligible. However, there truly was a very high chance of producing a high-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure.

“A reserve price of a million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence! Each bid has to increase by at least fifty thousand kilograms!” The black-haired maiden called out.

“1,050,000 kilograms. I’m taking these Five Elements Peacock Plumes.” An ancient voice rang out. The speaker was an old man dressed in a long, gaudy robe that was covered with draconic runes. Anyone who looked at the clothes would be able to tell right away that this should be someone from the imperial clan of the Grand Xia.

But...

In the Treasure Auction, no one gave a damn if you were from the imperial clan!

“My master is going to forge an Immortal-ranked magic treasure of the Five Elements. He’s lacking in some primary materials. 1,100,000 kilograms.” A white-whiskered youth said with a laugh.

“1,150,000 kilograms.” Another man called out, his entire body covered with azure light. He was built like a rod of iron.

“1,200,000 kilograms. I need a Five Elements Immortal-ranked magic treasure for my tribulation.” The speaker was Youngflame Xiushui. By now, he paid no attention to Ji Ning at all; he stared directly at the Five Elements plumes. Clearly, he was determined to acquire it.

“1,250,000 kilograms. The Raindragon Godpeak will take this.” A woman with a monstrous aura that filled the skies spoke out in an icy voice.

Every single person had an extraordinary background. However, the imperial capital of the Grand Xia had its laws, and no one was able to

take this thing by force. Everyone had to rely on their own ‘abilities’; whoever had more liquefied elemental essence would win! Materials like this, with a perfect set of the Five Elements...they were indeed extremely rare. You truly might only encounter them once; no one could say when such items would appear again. You couldn’t simply purchase them, even if you had enough liquefied elemental essence.

Many people wanted to acquire them. So, too, did Ning.

“Naturally formed by the Five Elements?” Ning’s eyes were shining. “I train the [Six Cycles of the Starseizer]. I need the essence of the Five Elements. These five plumes and the essence within them...based on the legacy of the [Starseizing Hand] which I acquired and the materials mentioned within them, these would definitely be considered absolutely high-grade materials. These are five plumes that were born from a peacock Godbeast with a supremely pure and exalted lineage. The essence of the Five Elements within them...they’d probably be enough to allow me to reach the third Cycle of my [Starseizing Hand]!”

“1,300,000 kilograms!” Ning called out loudly.

Chapter 17: Stopping At Nothing to Acquire It

Whoosh! Instantly, more than a thousand of the other customers at the Fortune Peaks all turned to stare. It must be understood that although they, too, were participating in the Treasure Auction, in reality they would only spend around fifty thousand kilograms or so in purchasing treasures. Only very, very few were truly willing to pay more than five hundred thousand kilograms! The entire networth of many Loose Immortals was perhaps lower than this amount, and their networth was usually tied up in their magic treasures!

Only a small portion of the people present at the Fortune Peaks were capable of making a bid of 1.3 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.

“It’s that Ji Ning again.”

“A mere Wanxiang Adept?”

“He dares to purchase the Five Elements peacock plumes?”

“Does he even have that much liquefied elemental essence?”

“He killed Youngflame Nong and a Primal-level Fiendgod. Youngflame Nong had quite a few treasures on him, and that Fiendgod probably had quite a few as well.”

A series of conversations erupted. Everyone was stunned at the fact that Ning dared to bid as well. After all, all five of the previous bidders had extraordinary backgrounds, and all of them were Immortals! Ji Ning? He was a mere Wanxiang Adept.

“1.35 million kilograms. Young fellow from the Black-White College, this is just raw materials, not an actual magic treasure; even if you buy it, it will be of no use to you. You have to match it with many other raw materials and invite a forging expert to forge an Immortal-ranked magic treasure for you.”

“1.4 million kilograms. Whoever bids the highest will gain the treasure. It doesn’t matter that Ji Ning is just a Wanxiang Adept; even an ordinary mortal who has enough money can bid. Don’t concern yourself over why he’s buying it.”

“1.5 million kilograms. Everyone, stop fighting with me over it. Master has needed this sort of Five Elements raw materials for a very long time.”

The price slowly began to rise. Ning, in turn, began to feel the pressure as well. After all, he had only sold off around 1.3 million kilograms of treasure earlier. Still, this was within his expectations; after all, the peacock plumes could serve as the primary materials for a high-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure. This wasn’t something which his Azuresilk Godfire Lamp could compete with. It was, after all, just a low-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure!

“Ji Ning, send the price sky-high and stun them.” Suddenly, the giant yellow bear’s voice rang out in his mind. “If they slowly bid it up, the final price will probably be even higher. Make an immediate bid of 2 million kilograms.”

Ning hesitated slightly. He was carrying the underwater estate with him, and the spirit of the estate was capable of sensing everything going on in the surrounding area.

“2 million kilograms!” Ning called out in a loud voice.

Instantly, the Fortune Peaks fell completely silent.

Earlier, the bidding increases had all been at slow increments of just fifty thousand kilograms. This sudden increase of five hundred thousand kilograms was simply too huge. After all, this wasn’t an actual Immortal-ranked magic treasure; just materials for making one.

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“He has that much liquefied elemental essence?” Princess Xiyue began to worry in her heart. When she saw Ning make bids, she wanted to help him...but she always stayed within the royal estate and rarely ventured out to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. As a result, she almost never

spent money, and thus she only carried some protective treasures with her. In addition, she was only a Wanxiang Adept herself; she naturally wouldn't have any Immortal-ranked magic treasures with her.

She didn't go out adventuring, and she always stayed in the imperial capital; thus, most likely the total value of the magic treasures she was carrying, if sold off, would only come to perhaps five hundred thousand or a million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.

2 or 2.5 million kilograms...not even many imperial princesses were capable of producing such a sum.

"If only Grandpa was here," Princess Xiyue mused silently to herself. Given how her Grandpa coddled her in all things, if he was here, purchasing the peacock plumes would only be a minor matter.

"This Ji Ning...how much treasure did he acquire from killing Youngflame Nong?" The nearby Fairy Azurewillow sighed, completely moved. "He even dares to bid on items like the peacock plumes. 2 million kilograms! That's enough to actually purchased a completed Immortal-ranked magic treasure."

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"Ji Ning only killed mere Youngflame Nong; how much could Youngflame Nong have possibly been worth? Ji Ning actually dares to bid two million kilograms?" A white-faced, beardless youth frowned.

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"Two million kilograms?" The man whose entire body glittered with a metallic azure light frowned as well. This price was indeed rather high. To produce a powerful Immortal-ranked magic treasure, other materials were needed as well. In addition, a Celestial Immortal Patriarch who was skilled in forging artifacts would have to personally oversee the forging, which would not be cheap either. Only after all these expenses would an Immortal-ranked magic treasure take form.

"What a fellow." Adept Woodpass, who had been watching this with intrigue, sighed in amazement as well. He couldn't help but cast the

distant Ning a deep, long glance. Two million kilograms? Ji Ning truly was quite wealthy.

As the saying went, a horse who was not fed an extra ration of grass wouldn't be fat and sturdy; to focus on training and searching for natural treasures truly wasn't as efficient as Ning's killing of Youngflame Nong. By killing Youngflame Nong, he had instantly grown rich!

"Fellow Daoist Xiushui, are you still planning to bid against him?" Adept Woodpass laughed. "I still have roughly half a million kilograms that I can lend to you, fellow Daoist."

"Thank you, fellow Daoist Woodpass." Youngflame Xiushui glanced towards a nearby attendant, and the azure-robed man immediately walked over.

"Didn't you say earlier that based on your investigations, Ning's trade with the Heavenly Treasures Mountain was only worth around 1.3 million kilograms?" Youngflame Xiushui said, frustrated and irritated, "If he only had 1.3 million kilograms, how would he dare make a bid of two million?"

The azure-robed servant said hurriedly, "Master, this information is absolutely correct. Don't worry; the Heavenly Treasures Mountain headquarters also knows that Ji Ning only traded for 1.3 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence with them. For him to suddenly bid two million...they, too, will be worried that Ning is not going to honor his bid for this auction, and so will go investigate him."

"Mm." Youngflame Xiushui nodded. His gaze suddenly lit up, as he already saw that atop the distant cloud on which Ning was seated, a man and a woman were flying towards him.

Ning had noticed two figures were flying towards him from behind as well. One was an azure-robed Yu Qi, while the white-robed one was a bald woman. As the two flew towards the cloud, a mist suddenly arose from it, completely blocking out the surrounding area, causing the outside world to have no idea what they were discussing.

The bald woman said with a smile, "Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, I am Soledust of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. I know that you, fellow Daoist, had

already traded for 1.3 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, but now that you are suddenly bidding 2 million...our Heavenly Treasures Mountain is concerned that in the end, this transaction cannot be completed.”

Ning nodded. In an ordinary treasure auction, if the auction failed due to insufficient funds from the winning bidder, it would be enough to just punish the faithless bidder by taking away his deposit of 5000 kilograms. But this was the auction for the peacock plumes; the value of it was simply too great. If Ning were to make random bids that he could not honor, there would be no way to make up for the damage done by just penalizing him 5000 kilograms.

“I truly hope you can understand our position, fellow Daoist Ji Ning,” the bald, white-robed woman said with great courtesy.

“I do understand,” Ning laughed. “I’ve heard earlier that during this Treasure Auction, if I have treasures of my own, I can hand them over to you for auctioning, right?”

“Right.” The bald, white-robed woman nodded.

“I have one right here.” Ning waved his hand, and an ancient, unassuming lamp appeared. The lamp had azure flames blazing above it. Instantly, the face of a child appeared within the azure flames. Scanning the surrounding area, the child sighed, “You locked me in your storage treasure for so long. That was really stifling. And whoah, what’s this place?”

“An Immortal-ranked magic treasure?” The white-robed woman was startled. “Azuresilk Godfire Lamp?”

An Azuresilk Godfire Lamp was considered a fairly common type of Immortal-ranked magic treasure. Described simply, it was just a type of lamp with Azuresilk Godfire within it, but the Godfire within the lamp could be borrowed to attack enemies. Although it was fairly common, quite a few experts would still fight over the chance to acquire one. After all, everyone wanted to help the skyfire in their bodies rise to the first grade if at all possible.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, are you saying that you are intending to auction off this Azuresilk Godfire Lamp? Here, at this Treasure Auction?” The white-robed woman asked.

“Right.” Ning nodded.

“Our Heavenly Treasures Mountain can just purchase it for a price of 1.5 million kilograms,” the white-robed woman, Soledust couldn’t refrain from saying. Although fairly common, it was extremely rare for an Azuresilk Godfire Lamp to appear at auction, and whenever one appeared, it would immediately be purchased. Naturally, the Heavenly Treasures Mountain was willing to accept it.

“No, I’ll sell it off in this Treasure Auction. Let’s set the reserve price at 1.5 million kilograms. If no one buys it, then I’ll sell it to you,” Ning said. “Fellow Daoist Soledust, you wouldn’t object to this, would you?”

The white-robed woman’s facial muscles twitched. A reserve price of 1.5 million kilograms? To be sold to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain only if no one was willing to buy it?

“No objections, no objections.” The white-robed woman picked up the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp, then turned and left.

Ning didn’t feel worried; when the Heavenly Treasures Mountain headquarters engaged in a business trade, they wouldn’t stop so low as to embezzling a single low-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure like an Azuresilk Godfire Lamp.

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The black-haired maiden standing on a cloud and officiating over this Treasure Auction was waiting for the investigate by her side to conclude. Now that she knew that Ning did indeed have the ability to complete this purchase, she immediately said, “2 million kilograms. Are there any higher bids?”

“It seems this Ji Ning does have the ability to honor his bid.” The pale-faced, beardless youth shook his head and sighed. “Too expensive. The price is too high.”

“The price is too high.”

People immediately began to give up. After all, Ning’s suddenly price increase of five hundred thousand kilograms had truly stunned quite a few people.

Still...there were others who remained greatly desirous of these peacock plumes.

“2.05 million kilograms!” The man who shone with a metallic azure light said with a growl, “This is something I need for my tribulation. I hope that you will all give me, Eastclown, some face.”

“Hmph, Eastclown, you need to pass your tribulation, but so do I! 2.1 million kilograms,” Youngflame Xiushui growled back.

Immortal Eastclown was just a solitary, wandering figure; although he was extremely powerful, Youngflame Xiushui was still of the Youngflame clan.

“2.15 million kilograms!” Immortal Eastclown growled.

“2.2 million kilograms!” Youngflame Xiushui ground his teeth.

“2.3 million kilograms!” A killing intent appeared in Immortal Eastclown’s eyes.

“2.35 million kilograms!” Youngflame Xiushui’s gaze was like ice.

The tribulation. This was the most difficult trial for any cultivator on an Immortal path. By passing the Celestial Tribulation, one would be able to escape the confines of the Three Realms, to live a carefree life, to live forever! Upon failing...if one was lucky, one would end up as a mere Loose Immortal. How could they not be willing to fight over a treasure helpful for their tribulations?”

“2.5 million kilograms!” Ning’s voice thundered out.

Youngflame Xiushui and Immortal Eastclown simultaneously turned to stare. All of the guests present turned to stare as well. They couldn’t help but begin to chatter about Ji Ning once again. This was insane. 2.5 million kilograms?!

“Youngflame Xiushui, do you have another bid?” Ji Ning stared at the distant Youngflame Xiushui. If the desire those two Earth Immortals towards acquiring the plumes could be described as ‘intense’, Ji Ning’s desire would have to be described as no less than theirs! Finding treasures with the essence extracts of the Five Elements...although it was a bit easier for the second Cycle of the Starseizer, the third Cycle was far more difficult.

The peacock plumes, however, were absolutely capable of allowing Ning to reach the second and third Cycles, with some left over! Of the divine abilities Ning trained in, the most powerful one was definitely the [Starseizing Hand]; this was ranked as one of the top ten divine abilities that had been created after the heavens had been established. It was supreme within the Three Realms!

Magic treasures, curios...those were all secondary. The divine ability, [Starseizing Hand], was what would make Ning’s power rise the most! The peacock plumes...he absolutely had to have them!

“2.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. Any higher bids? Any higher?” The black-haired maiden, atop her cloud, called out in a high voice. The Fortune Peaks were filled with a buzz of conversation, but not a single bid came out. Although Youngflame Xiushui’s face was quite ugly to behold, even he hesitated. As for Immortal Eastclown, he had no choice but to grit his teeth and accept it.

“If there are no higher bids, then this peacock plume will go to fellow Daoist Jij Ning!” The black-haired maiden made one final urging call to the crowd.

Chapter 18: The Princess Wishes to See Me?

After a long pause, during which the black-haired woman carefully looked at both Immortal Eastclown and Youngflame Xiushui, the woman called out loudly, “Done! 2.5 million kilograms. The peacock plumes go to fellow Daoist Ji Ning!” And with this declaration, the ownership of the peacock plumes was settled.

Youngflame Xiushui let out a single, long sigh.

Just now, he had been hesitating and considering to bid again, but in the end, his reason won out and held him back. The nearby Adept Woodpass gave him a glance, then picked up his goblet of wine and took a sip.

“Father, why didn’t you buy it?” Youngflame Jun couldn’t help but ask, “The peacock plumes would be of great service to you during your tribulation...and that Ji Ning was insisting on bidding straight against us. Whether for the sake of giving vent to our anger or for your tribulation, Father, you should’ve continued.”

“What do you know? 2.5 million kilograms? Do you even know how much that is?” Youngflame Xiushui stared at his son.

Youngflame Jun was stunned. His status in the clan could not be compared to Youngflame Nong’s; any amount of liquefied elemental essence above a million kilograms was already a vast, astronomical sum to him.

“With that much, I could just go ahead and buy an excellent Immortal-ranked magic treasure!” Youngflame Xiushui said, “There are many types of Immortal-ranked magic treasures that can be used for the tribulation; why should I completely focus my attentions on these peacock plumes? Paying more than 2.5 million kilograms isn’t worth it. That’s a sum of money that would have a major impact on my Immortal path; I can’t possibly make random, stupid bids just because I’m angry and want to give vent.”

Youngflame Jun nodded obediently.

“And this Ji Ning is an idiot as well.” Youngflame Xiushui turned to give him a cold look. “Even though he has the peacock plumes, he’s just a Wanxiang Adept. What’s the point of having them?”

“If we kill Ji Ning, then the peacock plumes will be ours,” Youngflame Jun said, a hint of desire in his eyes.

“And who would go do the killing?” Youngflame Xiushui shook his head. “This isn’t for something for you to concern yourself over.”

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“2.5 million kilograms.” Immortal Eastclown shook his head as well. “This young Wanxiang Adept is really quite crazy.”

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“2.5 million kilograms. My little brother really is...formidable.” Princess Xiyue stared at the distant Ning, a smile on her face.

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“Hmph. Acquiring the peacock plumes won’t do a damn thing for your power. After you leave the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, you die.” Immortal Floatcloud quietly drink his wine, watching from afar.

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Ning, however, was extraordinarily excited. Success! He had acquired the peacock plumes! Immortal-ranked magic treasures? Curios? Those were all less than a dog’s fart in comparison. His Primaltwin only needed a large amount of flying swords, while his main body, as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, mainly needed divine abilities!

“With this thing, I won’t have to trouble myself at all regarding the completion of the second and third Cycles for my [Starseizing Hand].” Ning was absolutely delighted.

Time continued to flow on.

Because there were more than a thousand magic treasures up for sale,

the entire Treasure Auction took up an entire day. Still, Ning left roughly six hours later, because during the sixth hour of the Treasure Auction, the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp came out for bidding.

Azuresilk Godfire Lamp, an Immortal-ranked magic treasure. This was a completed treasure!

It instantly aroused a storm of bidding. The Azuresilk Godfire Lamp was different from the peacock plumes; very few people needed those things, but quite a few had a use for the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp. This was because it could nurture 'skyfire' to the first grade! Although each usage of the lamp consumed a large amount of resources that took a long period of time to replenish, after the replenishment, it could be used again.

This was an item that could be used over and over!

However, because the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp needed time to absorb elemental energy from the natural world and replenish its own energy, none of the major tribes would ever be worried about having 'too many' of the lamps on hand.

The reserve price was 1.5 million kilograms, but the price quickly skyrocketed! It rose all the way up to a price of 2.45 million kilograms before the bidding came to an end.

Immortal-ranked magic treasures of this level were, in the end, still fairly common. Thus, the price would settle down at a certain point. There was a limit to how much it could rise during an auction.

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"He left?" Immortal Floatcloud immediately noticed when Ning began to prepare to leave. Frowning, he too began to leave.

Soon, Immortal Floatcloud arrived at the streets outside the Heavenly Treasures Mountain headquarters. It was early morning now. The Golden Crow had just risen into the skies, casting its light upon the world.

"Senior." Immortal Floatcloud's emergence caused the members of the Youngflame clan who were waiting outside to immediately move towards him.

“Ji Ning should be coming out soon. Go inside the Heavenly Treasures Mountain and keep an eye on him. Be ready to report as soon as he does.” Immortal Floatcloud gave them order, then began to wait outside silently. He was waiting for the final battle he would experience in his life! In this battle, he would use all of the power available to him to kill a supremely talented Wanxiang Adept within the imperial capital of the Grand Xia.

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“He’s leaving?” Princess Xiyue, upon seeing Ning prepare to leave, immediately rose to her feet. A hint of panic was in her eyes. She could feel her heart rate quickening, and she immediately said to the nearby Fairy Azurewillow, “Azurewillow, help me make some arrangements. I want to meet privately with Ji Ning.”

“Ji Ning?” Fairy Azurewillow was startled, but then she nodded. “I’ll go make the arrangements right now.”

“Thank you.” Earlier, when Princess Xiyue had been watching Ji Ning, she hadn’t felt that nervous. Now, however, as she thought about how they were about to meet, she immediately became incomparably nervous.

“Whew.” Princess Xiyue let out a long sigh, then said quietly to herself, “Little brother, we’re going to meet soon.”

Princess Xiyue began to withdraw from the event as well.

Actually, since the Treasure Auction would go on for a full day, over the course of it, quite a few people would withdraw.

Ning, after handing over his liquefied elemental essence, acquired his formation diagram and the peacock plumes.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, in the future, if you have any more magic treasures you don’t want, you can deliver them here to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. It doesn’t matter if you decide to sell them to us or if you sell them at the Treasure Auction.” The white-robed woman, Soledust, laughed.

“Treasures don’t just fall out of nowhere from the sky,” Ning sighed. “I even had to hand over my Azuresilk Godfire Lamp to you.”

Soledust laughed, then withdrew.

Ning, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing glanced towards the nearby violet-robed Yu Qi.

“Fellow Daoist Yu Qi, I wish to purchase some flying swords,” Ning said.

“Flying swords?” Yu Qi was instantly delighted. He knew very well that Ning had more than a million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence on him. This was a major customer! He immediately said, “What sort of flying swords? Just tell me what you need. We have plenty of precious flying swords manufactured by Celestial Immortal Patriarchs, and in fact we even have flying swords with powerful formations within them.”

Ning shook his head. “I only require large-scale manufactured flying swords.”

“Large-scale manufactured...” Yu Qi’s face stiffened. The profit on those was incredibly low; after all, Ning could buy them at a 40% discount.

“I need a total of 720 high-grade Heaven-ranked flying swords,” Ning said.

Yu Qi’s facial muscles spasmed. Good heavens; Heaven-ranked flying swords? 720 of them? Was this a joke? It must be understood that even many Loose Immortals would generally use Heaven-ranked magic treasures; many of them would just use several particularly powerful ones. Even those who focused on victory through superior numbers would at most have a few dozen Heaven-ranked magic treasures, which was already quite incredible.

720 Heaven-ranked magic treasures? The number alone would terrify quite a few people! But in turn, the price was quite high as well.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, are you certain you want 720? Are you able to afford them?” Yu Qi couldn’t help but add, “High-grade Heaven-ranked magic treasures are generally around 5000 kilograms per sword. If you want more than 700 of them, then you’d need to pay over 3.5 million kilograms.”

Ning frowned. Ugh! Earlier, he had felt that he was quite wealthy, but

when he thought about the price of seven hundred Heaven-ranked magic treasures, he suddenly felt his heart ache with unbearable pain.

“Go ahead and give me a book on the types of mass-produced Heaven-ranked flying swords,” Ji Ning said.

“Alright. This way, please,” Yu Qi said hurriedly. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain both bought and sold mass-produced magic items to Ji Ning at a price of 60% the list price. On the surface, it would seem as though they didn’t earn any money at all. In reality, however, the mass-produced magic treasures which the Heavenly Treasures Mountain sold were all mass-produced by the mighty imperial clan of the Grand Xia, which stood behind them.

In truth, the cost for the imperial clan to mass-produce these magic items wasn’t really as high as 60% of the list price; at most, 30% to 40%. The reason they told the outside world that they were willing to both buy and sell these items at 60% was just to encourage more people to come shopping. After all, after an Immortal cultivator purchased a life-saving treasure, it was quite rare for them to later sell it off.

Thus, Yu Qi would earn quite a bit from this deal for 700+ Heaven-ranked flying swords, even if they were only mass-produced artifacts.

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Ning was seated before a gazebo, staring at the rising sun and in quite a good mood. He had no idea that right now, on the streets outside, a Loose Immortal named Immortal Floatcloud was waiting for him impatiently.

“Here’s the report regarding the mass-produced Heaven-ranked flying swords.” Yu Qi handed Ning a thick, fur-clad book. Ning flipped it open, taking a look. By his side, the Whitewater Houna and Little Qing helped scan thorough it as well.

Mass-produced flying swords were rather cheap, because mass-produced flying swords mainly required only that the swords were sharp and hard to break. In other aspects, they were quite poor.

“Low-grade Heaven-ranked flying swords are 500 kilograms each? At a

discounted price of 60%, that's just 300 kilograms." Ning mumbled to himself while reading. "Middle-grade is a bit more expensive; 1500 kilograms each."

There were nearly a hundred types of low-grade Heaven-ranked flying swords.

There were nearly two hundred types of middle-grade Heaven-ranked flying swords.

There were far fewer high-grade Heaven-ranked flying swords; just eighteen.

As for top-grade Heaven ranked flying swords? There was no such thing as a mass-produced 'top-grade' flying sword. High grade was already the limit for Heaven-ranked mass-produced flying swords.

"High-grade, Heaven-ranked flying swords are all roughly 5000 kilograms each." Ning frowned. "What should I do?"

He was going to purchase them for his Primaltwin to train in. The [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] was a technique where the more and the better flying swords he had, the more powerful it would be! However, controlling so many flying swords was incredibly taxing on the soul. Still, during his year of training in the underwater estate, Ning's soul had improved dramatically, especially with the support of the Nuwa visualization technique and the fact that his Primaltwin's soul was being nourished.

Ning was currently able to control all 720 Earth-ranked flying swords. But if they were to be changed into Heaven-ranked flying swords? Most likely, for at least a period of time, it would be hard for him to control that many.

"I'll take 198 of these Redsol swords!" Ning pointed towards the book. "And these Netherblue swords, I'll take 198 of them as well!"

"The Redsol swords were 5500 kilograms each, while the Netherblue swords are 3500 each," the nearby Yu Qi said with a laugh. "All together, this comes out to be a price of 1,945,000 kilograms of liquefied elemental

essence. At the discounted price of 60%, that comes out to be 1,185,300 million.

Ning felt resigned. After factoring in the money he had spent...the 2.3 million kilograms he had remaining had been almost completely used up, leaving just a bit behind. In addition, his Primaltwin actually needed elemental essence as well.

“Here!” Ning waved his hand, and instantly, the black dragon carriage appeared on the ground next to them. “I’ll sell this carriage to your Heavenly Treasures Mountain,” Ning said majestically.

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The black dragon construct had the combat power of a Primal Daoist. Youngflame Nong had often ridden it about the various locations of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia; naturally, its price was extraordinary. In the end, Ning acquired not only his 396 Heaven-ranked flying swords, but also 60,000 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, there’s one more thing.” Yu Qi, after concluding their deal, suddenly winked and laughed, “Princess Xiyue wishes to meet with you.”

“A princess wants to see me?” Ning was startled.

Chapter 19: Peak Primal

“Master, it must be because you made a name for yourself during the Treasure Auction?” The nearby Little Qing immediately added, “That’s why this Princess Xiyue wants to meet you.”

Ning grinned as well. During the Treasure Auction, he had purchased the peacock plumes for 2.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. Even Youngflame Xiushui had lowered his head and retreated in the end. This news would definitely spread like wildfire, and later on, some of the major clans would come to befriend him and meet him. This was within his realm of expectations. However, for Princess Xiyue to invite him for a meeting while the Treasure Auction was still going on... his ‘fame’ was perhaps just a bit too effective!

“Might I ask who Princess Xiyue is?” Ning asked..

“Princess Xiyue is from King Yan’s Estate,” Yu Qi explained.

“King Yan?” Ning’s eyes lit up. Ning had already purchased intelligence reports regarding some of the major powers and figures within the imperial capital of the Grand Xia. King Yan was one of those major figures. King Yan...was a Celestial Immortal who had just recently succeeded in overcoming his tribulation!

He was a Celestial Immortal! It was simply far, far too difficult to become a Celestial Immortal. Just by looking at the history of the Black-White College, one could tell how hard it was. The Black-White College had existed for countless millions of years, and every ten thousand years or so would produce an Earth Immortal or Loose Immortal. How many had they produced over the countless ages? And yet, they had only produced a single Celestial Immortal!

From this, one could tell what a terrifying barrier the Celestial Tribulation was. Countless geniuses, such as Immortal Northwalker or even Immortal Juhua, who had the benefit of the underwater estate, had failed and perished.

Celestial Immortals were simply too rare! It was rare for the Grand Xia

Empire to produce a single Celestial Immortal in a million years!

However, how many Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals did it produce during a million years? This was why there were actually very many Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals; the Youngflame clan alone held more than a thousand of them. Every few tens or hundreds of millennia, there would be a new 'batch' of Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals...but the number of Celestial Immortals who had arisen from them over the course of countless years was pitifully low.

Any Celestial Immortal was the foundation of his or her entire clan! Even for the mighty imperial Xiamang clan of the Grand Xia Dynasty, a Celestial Immortal was extremely valuable. For clans like the imperial Xiamang clan, which had unified an entire major world, the number of Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals under their control was an absolutely terrifying figure. Naturally, however, these figures had very ordinary statuses. If, however, one of them were to break through and become a Celestial Immortal...the imperial clan of the Grand Xia would immediately bestow upon them the royal title of 'King' and give them an estate, Immortal treasures, etc...

In short, within the imperial clan of the Grand Xia, anyone who became a Celestial Immortal would see his status suddenly and explosively skyrocket!

This often happened less than once in a million years...and yet King Yan was the latest, newest Celestial Immortal!

"Of King Yan's Estate..." Ning nodded inwardly to himself.

"Princess Xiyue is the only family member King Yan has," Yu Qi said in a lowered voice. "King Yan absolutely dotes on Princess Xiyue. He even allows Princess Xiyue to command the Golden Imperials which the Emperor bestowed upon him. He even gave Princess Xiyue a pair of azure phoenix Godbeasts, having them pull her carriage for her. Those two azure phoenixes have incomparably exalted lineages; although they are only at the Primal level, each of them have the combat power of a supreme Loose Immortal. As for the Golden Imperials, they are the

absolute elites of the Imperial Guards of the imperial capital. Even the weakest amongst them is at least a Primal Daoist!”

Ning, hearing this, was secretly speechless.

Azure phoenixes? Golden Imperials?

“Princess Xiyue usually remains within King Yan’s Estate and rarely comes out, nor does she participate in the various gatherings for nobles,” Yu Qi said in a low voice. “That’s why Princess Xiyue actually isn’t very well-known. However, given how much King Yan dotes on her, if she truly was the spoiled, arrogant throwing type, she probably would be even more famous than Youngflame Nong.”

“Then why does she wish to see me?” Ning asked.

“I don’t know either,” Yu Qi said, shaking his head. “I heard that today, she came to the Treasure Auction along with Fairy Azurewillow of our Heavenly Treasures Mountain. Perhaps she grew curious upon seeing you, and so she wishes to meet you.”

Ning hesitated a moment, then nodded. “Fine. Lead the way.”

Yu Qi laughed. “Follow me.”

Within Ning’s Zifu region. The underwater estate was located there.

Generally speaking, there was no way to put people within storage treasures, but estate treasures were capable of holding people. Ning’s Primaltwin continued to reside within the underwater estate. There, within the main hall, a black-robed Ning was seated in the lotus position, a jade bottle placed in front of him. Within the jade bottle, there was a total of 60,000 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. This came from the earlier trade he had engaged in.

Whooosh.

The black-robed Ning opened his mouth. Instantly, the liquefied elemental essence began to flow in a continuous stream towards Ning’s mouth, and his power began to quickly rise. Just a few moments later, he broke through to the peak Primal level.

“Good.” After stabilizing his power base slightly, the black-robed Ning came to a halt. “Mm.” The black-robed Ning looked at the jade bottle. “More than 15,000 kilograms remain. My Primaltwin has broken through to the peak Primal level.”

In the past year after forging his Primaltwin, the divine soul of the Primaltwin had advanced at a frightfully fast pace. This was because of the Primal nurturing effect; thus, his Primaltwin had advanced even more quickly in soul power than his true body had! The Primaltwin’s divine sense could now stretch to a distance of 1600 kilometers, while his main body’s divine sense had only just recovered to the pre-splitting level of power, just barely reaching 1000 kilometers.

A powerful soul! A high level of comprehension! A mighty Dao-heart!

After reaching the peak Primal level, the Primaltwin was virtually instantly able to fully control his elemental ki. Everything was as familiar to him as the back of his hand; there wasn’t the slightest bit of discomfort at all.

“Flying swords.” The black-robed Ning willed it. Whoosh! Instantly, the surrounding area, with a swish swish swish series of sounds, became filled with 405 flying swords, each of which emanated mighty ripples of power. Those nine flying swords in the center, in particular, emanated truly mighty ripples! These 405 flying swords were all Heaven-ranked flying swords, and 396 of them had been purchased just now at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.

As for those nine other Heaven-ranked flying swords...more than a year ago, by relying on his Primaltwin, Ning had overcome the fifth level of the Wargod Hall, and then chosen from the Heaven-ranked magic items of the Treasure Hall.

These nine Heaven-ranked flying swords were known as the Waterbreaker Godshark Swords. The primary material for the forging of these swords had been the body of a slain, primordial nine-headed Godshark that had existed in the era before the three thousand major worlds had even been born. These nine flying swords were all quasi-

sentient. According to the rating of the underwater estate, all nine were high-grade Heaven-ranked flying swords. However, according to the rating system of the Grand Xia Dynasty, they were absolutely top-grade Heaven-ranked, and each of them were probably worth 100,000 to 150,000 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence! And with all nine coming from the same source...the set was probably worth a million kilograms, and could be traded for a low-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure.

In the past, when Immortal Juhua had owned the underwater estate, he had acquired a top-grade Heaven-ranked magic treasure as well. By relying on the magic treasures of the underwater estate...he could've gone and traded them for Immortal-ranked magic treasures..

Unfortunately...he would only have been able to trade them for low-grade or middle-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures.

To overcome the Celestial Tribulation? One had to at least have high-grade, or even top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures in order to have a degree of confidence. It would be best if the magic treasures were also suited to one's abilities; that would give an even better chance. All of the Immortal-ranked magic treasures of the underwater estate were at least high-grade, and some were even top-grade. Unfortunately, Immortal Juhua hadn't had the chance to choose from them, as he had only been given the chance to do so after becoming a Loose Immortal and overcoming the seventh level of the Wargod Hall.

"[Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]." The black-robed Ning willed it. With the nine Waterbreaker Godshark Swords serving as the core, all the other flying swords were activated. The exquisitely pure elemental ki of a peak Primal Daoist filled them, and Ning's powerful soul began to guide them. All of the flying swords began to ripple as Ning tested time and time again the limits of his power.

"Can't do it."

"I'll drop it by one level. [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], level four!" The black-robed Ning was striving to test his might, but Heaven-

ranked magic treasures were on a completely different level than Earth-ranked magic treasures. Controlling a single Heaven-ranked magic treasure was at least as hard as controlling more than ten Earth-ranked magic treasures! Even though Ning was relying on formation techniques to lessen the difficulty...it was still extremely hard for him to execute the fourth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

“[Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], level three!”

Whoosh! Instantly, more than two hundred Heaven-ranked flying swords all began to flutter in the air, emanating an incomparably powerful ripple of power. Immediately afterwards, a flying sword appeared in front of Ning’s chest as well. This flying sword, which managed to completely manifest, flashed repeatedly with a golden metallic light. Swords were sharp in weapons; for metallic light to flash off a sword was a testament to the quality of the sharp aura of the sword.

The flying sword, flashing with golden light, held power within it that caused even Ning to feel astonished.

“Such power.” Although he was only using a bit more than 200 Heaven-ranked magic treasures, the effect was far more powerful than when he used 700+ Earth-ranked magic treasures. It was a huge increase in power, an increase of more than just one level.

Generally speaking, it was incredible for Primal Daoists to be able to control even a few dozen magic treasures. Ning, however, was able to control more than two hundred, and amongst them were incomparably precious flying swords such as the Watercutter Godshark Swords. It could be said that Ning’s soul was at the Earth Immortal level. He controlled a Grand Dao Domain, and was quite skilled in formations. The [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] itself was quite special to begin with. The combination of these factors was why he was able to control more than two hundred Heaven-ranked magic treasures.

“By relying on my sword formation...my Primaltwin is strong enough to compare to supreme Loose Immortals!” Ning felt a boundless heroic feeling within his heart.

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Within a quiet, secluded residence. The windows were all closed, and even the servants had departed. Within the residence was only Princess Xiyue. Outside the door, however, there were some servants, and a group of Golden Imperials remained on constant guard.

“Ji Ning.” Princess Xiyue held a cup of warm wine in her hands, unable to suppress the excitement and nervousness in her heart. “We are finally going to meet.”

“My cousin. My one and only little brother.”

Princess Xiyue’s heart was nervous, excited, and tense.

Suddenly, a voice rang out from outside. “Go report to the Princess. Ji Ning has already arrived.”

“Wait a moment. I’ll make the report,” a servant said.

“He’s here!” Princess Xiyue took a deep breath. This was as nervous as she had ever been during the past thirty years; she was even more nervous than when she had met Grandpa for the first time.

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Ji Ning and Yu Qi were both standing outside the door to the courtyard.

The Heavenly Treasures Mountain was simply too vast. It had taken them quite a while to go from Ning’s previous location to this place. Ning’s Primaltwin had reached the peak Primal level long ago, and had already begun to test the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] when they arrived.

“The Princess is instructing Ji Ning to enter,” an armored female soldier said.

“Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, I’ll leave now. If there’s anything you need, you can find any staff member of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain and ask them to send a word to me,” Yu Qi laughed.

“Thank you for your help this time, fellow Daoist Yu Qi. If I have any business in the future, I’ll definitely seek you out again,” Ning said.

After the exchange of farewells, Yu Qi left. As for Ning, he said to the nearby Little Qing and Whitewater Hound, "Little Qing, Uncle White, wait here a while for me."

"Right." Uncle White and Little Qing both believed that there shouldn't be any danger, here within the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.

Ning immediately entered the courtyard by himself. After entering the courtyard, Ning felt a surge of mental pressure, due to the troop of Imperial Gods who were watching him carefully. Moments later, the female guard led him to a stand-alone residence, then pushed at the door. "The Princess is inside."

The door opened.

Ning saw a green-robed woman seated inside. Right at this moment, the green-robed woman turned to look at him as well.

Their gazes intersected.

Chapter 20: Sister and Brother Meet

Ji Ning understood that this green-robed woman in front of him should be Princess Xiyue. From this first glance...Ning felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity and closeness towards her.

“My respects, Princess,” Ning said.

“Sit.” Princess Xiyue spoke out.

Only now did Ning take a seat.

Princess Xiyue, however, remained standing. She waved her arm, and a series of formation flags began to fly out, emanating a gray, rippling power. These nine formation flags penetrated into the wooden floor, and a series of ripples began to emanate from the formation flags, quickly covering the entire residence. A series of Dao-seals began to flow atop the surface of the residence, instantly and completely severing it from the outside world.

“Now no one can spy on our conversation,” Princess Xiyue said. “This is a magic treasure which Grandpa gave me; upon hiding within it and retracting one’s aura, even Celestial Immortals would find it difficult to detect you.”

“Princess, you are doing this because...?” Ning was puzzled. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain publicly proclaimed that they would never spy on the conversations of their customers. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain relied on the faith of its customers; unless they were willing to pay a truly high price for it, there was no way they would eavesdrop on the conversation of two guests.

Their sterling reputation had been built up over the course of countless years. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain wouldn’t dare act rashly in matters that would affect it.

“I have to be careful.” Princess Xiyue looked at Ning. Ning felt his heart clench; it seemed as though Princess Xiyue hadn’t just invited him for a simple meeting.

“Ji Ning, I ask you this.” Princess Xiyue looked at him. “Your mother was Yuchi Snow? You are a descendant of the Yuchi clan?”

Ning frowned. He wasn't willing to discuss his mother with others. “Princess, the Youngflame clan is pursuing me because they believe me to be one of the surviving spawn of the Yuchi clan. Although this information is quite well hidden, for someone like you, Princess, it shouldn't be too hard to acquire this type of report.” Ning was rather displeased.

Princess Xiyue, however, revealed a look of delight. She could already tell the truth from Ning's reaction. She immediately said, “Actually, I found out about it long ago, and I even sent people to your West Prefecture City of Swallow Mountain to investigate. Only, I still couldn't quite believe it, so I had to ask you myself.”

“Oh?” Ning, surprised and puzzled, asked her, “Princess, you sent people to Swallow Mountain to investigate? Dare I ask, why did you seek me out, Princess?”

She was so cautious, and her words gave no clues at all. What in the world was this princess up to?

“Ji Ning.” Princess Xiyue began to feel rather nervous. Looking at Ning, she said, “Actually, actually, I, I...”

Ning just looked at her.

“Actually...you are my little brother.” Princess Xiyue finally said the words.

“Little brother? My mother only had one son; me.” Ning immediately shook his head, refuting these words. However, in his heart, a different idea came to Ning's mind...little brother? Could it be that this Princess Xiyue was the cousin which his mother had always been thinking about, the final successor to the Yuchi clan's lineage? 1

“You are my younger cousin. I'm your older cousin.” Princess Xiyue said, “My father's name...was Yuchi Mount!”

Ning was stunned.

Although this thought had flashed through his mind earlier...when Princess Xiyue said the words, Ning was still rather stunned.

“But...you are a princess. A princess of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia,” Ning said.

“King Yan is only my maternal grandfather; my mother was of the Xiamang clan, but I am a true heir of the Yuchi clan. My true name is Yuchi Xiyue.” Princess Xiyue looked at Ning.

Ning’s heart was in a state of chaos now. In the past, Ning’s uncle, Yuchi Mount, had given up his life in order to block the forces of Snowdragon Mountain and protect his pregnant little sister, Ning’s mother. He had been the strongest one of their group, but he had died. In doing so, he had allowed Ning’s parents, Ji Yichuan and Yuchi Snow, to escape with their lives. The bitter seeds sown in that year, however...had caused his parents to only live for a fairly brief period of time. Ning’s father had always felt guilt towards Ning’s uncle, and even more guilt towards his daughter, whom they had never seen before.

Strictly speaking...although Ning also carried the blood of the Yuchi clan in his veins, he was a child of the Ji clan! Only his older cousin...only she, and she alone, was a true member of the Yuchi clan!

“Your name is Yuchi Xiyue? Your father was Yuchi Mount?” Ning couldn’t even believe it.

“Yes.” Princess Xiyue nodded heavily.

“Princess...it’s not that I don’t want to believe you. However, this matter is of tremendous importance to me. We have to test our blood together.” Ning’s heart was filled with excitement as well. Actually, upon Princess Xiyue saying that she was the daughter of Ning’s uncle, Ning had already been mostly convinced. This was because...very, very few people knew about Ning’s uncle. As for the fact that Ning’s uncle had a daughter, even within the Ji clan, only Ning and his parents knew about it. His parents had already passed away. No one else could possibly know.

Ning himself had never before revealed this to anyone. And so, this Princess Xiyue who stood in front of him was indeed quite possibly his

own cousin, who he had never seen before!

“Alright. Let me test our blood.” Princess Xiyue immediately slashed out with her fingernail, using it as the tip of a dagger to prick her own wrist.

Swish. Instantly, fresh, scarlet blood flicked out.

Ning stretched out his own wrist, using his own finger to cut it as well. After he cut his own wrist and the blood flew out, the wound on his wrist instantly healed.

Those two drops of blood flew towards each other in midair, forming into two small spheres of blood. These two spheres of blood swiveled around each other, and as they did, Ning executed a technique that would cause blood from the same lineage to resonate with each other. Instantly, golden runes began to flash atop the two spheres of blood. Whooooooooosh. Slowly...strands of golden blood began to appear above the two spheres of blood.

The two strands of golden blood quickly began to ravel around each other, forming into one. There was no way to tell them apart now.

“It’s true!” Ning was stunned.

“It’s true. It’s true!” Princess Xiyue revealed a look of excitement and joy as well. Although she had engaged in deep, thorough investigations, those couldn’t compare to testing their blood lineage.

“Cousin...” Ning stared at Princess Xiyue, still in a shaken state. This news had simply arrived too quickly. He had truly been caught caught off-guard.

“Little brother. Little brother.” Princess Xiyue excitedly stretched her hands out, clutching at Ning’s own hands. Because she had mentally prepared herself over the course of the past year, she had been desiring to meet Ning this entire time. She simply hadn’t been able to find him.

“My cousin is Princess Xiyue? A princess of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia?” Ning still couldn’t believe this was happening.

Princess Xiyue let out a long sigh, then said, “What’s the point of being

a princess? It's all too late...Grandpa came too late. If he had come a bit earlier, then my father, my mother, and even Aunt...none of those tragedies would have occurred."

"What happened? The exalted King Yan just allowed his own daughter and son-in-law to die, without even responding to it?" Ning couldn't help but say these words.

"You don't understand the situation back then." Princess Xiyue said slowly, "Grandpa was of an extremely distant branch of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia. Even though he worked hard and trained to become a Void-level Earth Immortal, all he received was a few treasures from the imperial clan that were mandated by the rules. Every single person who became an Earth Immortal would be bestowed those treasures. That was it; just a few treasures. After that? They no longer paid any attention to my grandfather. His status within the imperial clan of the Grand Xia remained low."

Ning nodded. He could understand. Just look at the Ji clan; the Ji clan had only been within the Swallow Mountain region for a comparatively short period of time, but the number of clansmen it had was truly astonishing.

The imperial clan of the Grand Xia had begun to establish itself as soon as this major world had been born. From then til now, countless, unfathomable numbers of eons had passed. The passage of so much time had caused the imperial clan of the Grand Xia to possess an utterly breathtaking population; just the number of people with the surname of Xiamang was beyond number.

As for Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals? Within the Black-White College, they might be major figures.

Within the Youngflame clan, they might be considered fairly powerful figures.

But within the imperial clan of the Grand Xia? They'd just be given a few treasures, and then let loose to live or die on their own merits. If they were to fail their tribulation and perish, the imperial clan of the Grand

Xia wouldn't even notice! Only those who succeeded in overcoming their tribulation...only then would they suddenly ascend to the heavens in status. The imperial clan of the Grand Xia would immediately bestow all sorts of treasures, estates, and guards to them, treating them with incomparable importance.

"My grandfather had average talent, and trained very slowly," Princess Xiyue said slowly. "There are very few members of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia who are viewed as important. Grandpa wasn't one of them...and so he went out to adventure, tempering himself between life and death, striving to encounter a major twist of fate. In fact, he even trained in some evil, demonic secret arts.

"Evil, demonic secret arts?" Ning was amazed.

"Right. When facing the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations, he even activated his evil demonic arts to voluntarily draw more demonic mental attacks to himself, causing them to grow even stronger," Princess Xiyue said. "The more powerful those demonic mental attacks, the more his own Dao-heart could be tempered and the stronger it would grow."

"He's an absolute madman." Ning was utterly astonished now. The Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations...all Immortal cultivators were terrified of them and wanted to come up with ways to weaken them. But this King Yan actually came up with a method to cause the demonic mental attacks to become even more powerful, so as to temper himself? Yes, this did indeed have the effect of strengthening his Dao-heart, and it was astonishing effective, but...if he failed, he would've died.

"Once, Grandpa was successfully enticed and seduced by the demonic mental attacks. That was incredibly dangerous," Princess Xiyue said. "In fact, he completely transformed into a crazed demon, and he began to torture and rape women with wild abandon."

Ning was secretly speechless. Be driven into an insane state during the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations? That virtually guaranteed death. Many of the major demons and vile figures were born after having been driven into an insane state. They would die in their insanity, unless some

sort of a miracle occurred, allowing them to reawaken from their crazed state.

“Afterwards, a miracle occurred and Grandpa came back to his senses. The process of entering an insane demonic state and then recovering was tremendously beneficial to Grandpa. Afterwards, he endured all sorts of trials and tests, and in the end he actually overcame the Celestial Tribulation, becoming a Celestial Immortal.” Princess Xiyue sighed with emotion. “After becoming a Celestial Immortal, he could sense those of his bloodline. He could sense that he had family still alive, and so he began to search. In the end...he found me.”

“My grandmother...she was one of the countless women who he raped in the past. After being raped, Grandma gave birth to Mother. Because this was an out-of-wedlock birth, they were all viewed with contempt by the other clansmen on our island. They shunned the two of them...and in the end, Grandma died in depression.”

“Then Father arrived on our island. He had grown weary of fleeing. He wanted to live permanently on this island. He wanted to take Mother as his wife, and continue the lineage of our Yuchi clan. Father and Mother joined together...and in the end, I was born.”

“Those were the happiest years of my life.”

“Father was an Immortal cultivator, and would often fly out of the island to other places. However, he would always come back very quickly. One day, Father said that his little sister and his brother-in-law wanted to leave the Darknorth Seas and return to the mainland. Father said that his little sister was pregnant and that he was worried about her, so he was going to personally escort them.”

“But...when Father left, he never returned. The life-tablet he left at home shattered. Mother couldn’t bear this mental blow, and filled with both grief and agony, she perished as well.”

“I lived by myself, there on that island. Afterwards...Grandpa came.”

“Grandpa had already become a Celestial Immortal by then, but he had no family members of his own. All of his closest family members had

died. I was the only family member left, his one and only granddaughter.” Princess Xiyue continued to speak slowly.

As for Ning, he was silent.

The path of Immortal cultivation was a lonely one. Although King Yan was a member of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia, generally speaking, after five or six generations of separation, one couldn't truly be described as 'family'. King Yan's parents and brothers had died long ago. As for family, only one was left; his one and only granddaughter.

“I came with Grandpa to the imperial capital. I investigate and discovered that our Yuchi clan had been annihilated by the Youngflame clan.” Hatred was in the eyes of Princess Xiyue. “From that day forward, I swore an oath that I, Yuchi Xiyue, would definitely take revenge. I would definitely destroy the Youngflame clan! And, I'm going to re-establish the Yuchi clan, fulfilling my father's dream! This was what my father had always dreamed of...and I am definitely going to accomplish it!”

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1. Chinese lineages are patriarchal; because Ning's lineage was through his mother, he is not a 'real' Yuchi clan member, and is considered a 'Ji' clan member. Xiyue's lineage, however, is from her father, and so she is a 'real' Yuchi clan member. Alas, because there are no male Yuchi clan members left, technically speaking, she is the 'final' one of this line.

Chapter 21: The Enemy of the Two Cousins

“Annihilate the Youngflame clan?” Ning was stunned. Even though he viewed the Youngflame clan as a major, powerful foe, deep in his heart, Ning had the same desire...to utterly eradicate the Youngflame clan, so as to console the spirit of his mother!

His mother’s sisters, father, and family members...the entire Yuchi clan had died in the hands of the Youngflame clan.

His mother must have deeply desired to eradicate the Youngflame clan...but the Youngflame clan was simply too powerful, so powerful that Yuchi Mount never even dared to tell Princess Xiyue that their enemy, the one who had destroyed their clan, was the Youngflame clan. Yuchi Snow had never told Ning this secret either. This was an ancient tribe that could rank in the top ten of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty, a might tribe that had existed from the Fiendgod Era into the present era. Who would dare claim that they would definitely annihilate a clan such as this?

Ning had this desire in his heart...but he wouldn’t dare say these words.

Princess Xiyue, however, did!

Ning could sense the hatred in his cousin’s words, a hatred that had forged into a will that would pay any price and stop at absolutely nothing to accomplish its goals!

“This was Father’s dream. Father died...and I’ll do it on his behalf.” Princess Xiyue ground her teeth. “Even if I fail and die, in failing, I’ll deliver a vicious bite to the Youngflame clan.”

“Cousin,” Ning couldn’t help but say, “The eradication of the Youngflame clan isn’t something to be rushed.”

“Of course. I know that.” Princess Xiyue shook her head. “I haven’t even told Grandpa of my intentions, because I know that while perhaps the entire imperial Xiamang clan is capable of wiping out the Youngflame clan, the imperial clan will not do such a thing. The imperial clan isn’t

willing to pay the price of having the countless tribes under its command feel frightened, restless, and possibly rebel.

Ning nodded.

If the imperial clan were to wipe out a major tribe, they would have to have a sufficiently solid excuse! They couldn't just find a random excuse to do this. The many marquises of the world weren't fools, after all; the Youngflame clan would have had to truly commit a heinous crime that exceeded the imperial clan's bottom line before the imperial clan would eradicate them. Otherwise...if the imperial clan could just wipe out another clan on a whim, how could the other marquises feel at ease?

Most likely, they would all revolt together, and by then, this major world would probably once more enter into a state of chaotic war, just like in the Fiendgod Era.

One of the reasons why the imperial clan of the Grand Xia had been able to unify the world was because many tribes had given them their support and subordinated themselves to it. If these tribes were to all revolt, then it was very likely that the imperial clan of the Grand Xia would come to a calamitous end.

"That's why I'm enduring it for now. There aren't even many people in the imperial capital who know that my name is actually Yuchi Xiyue. I asked Grandpa not to tell others," Princess Xiyue said. "I don't want to cause the Youngflame clan to be on guard against me. I will find a chance, seek out all opportunities, and use any means necessary. When I act, I will make sure that this Youngflame clan is wiped out...and even if I fail, I'll make them suffer a grievous wound."

"Cousin, what are you planning?" Ning was quite puzzled. His cousin had an ordinary level of power; to annihilate the Youngflame clan? Not even a Celestial Immortal would dare say such things.

"If I had your talent, I would definitely work hard to train and become a Celestial Immortal. Upon becoming a Celestial Immortal, I will have as much time as I need to slowly work against them." Princess Xiyue shook her head. "But I don't have your talent, so I'll have to borrow power from

others. I plan to borrow the power of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia.”

“Borrow power?” Ning was startled.

“The imperial clan of the Grand Xia doesn’t have enough of a reason to wipe them out. So...I’ll have to come up with a way to give them enough of a reason,” Princess Xiyue said. “Even if I have to use my own life...it will be worth it. But I know that even if I sacrifice myself, it will still be quite hard. No matter how hard it is, however, I’ll strive to accomplish it. I’ll slowly wait...silently wait...”

Princess Xiyue seemed to have transformed into a vengeful, venomous viper; she was silently waiting, waiting for the moment to deliver her final blow.

“To annihilate the Youngflame clan in my lifetime will be very, very hard.” Resolve flashed through Princess Xiyue’s eyes. “That’s why I’m going to find a husband. I’m not going to marry out; I’m going to bring one in. The children I give birth to will follow me in publicly using the surname ‘Chi’. My children will have children of their own, and our family will grow from one generation to the next...and the ultimate goal of my descendants will be bringing down the Youngflame clan!”

“I have Grandpa backing me up; I’m his only family member. Even if I die, I’ll beg Grandpa to help me take care of the Chi clan,” Princess Xiyue said. “Grandpa is a Celestial Immortal Patriarch of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia; with his protection, the Chi clan will definitely grow stronger and stronger. When the Chi clan itself gives birth to a Celestial Immortal, or when the Youngflame clan is finally annihilated, the Chi clan will truly return to becoming the ‘Yuchi’ clan.

Ning took a deep breath. He couldn’t help but feel his heart quiver at the hatred contained within his cousin’s words.

Yes. She was different from him.

He was a child of the Ji clan; this was why his mother, Yuchi Snow, didn’t even mention the Yuchi clan’s feud. In turn, the hatred he felt for the Youngflame clan hadn’t truly sunk into his bones. But his cousin was

a true descendant of the Yuchi clan. Ning's uncle, Yuchi Mount, had trained her from childhood and had told her stories of the former glory of the Yuchi clan.

Although Yuchi Mount had never told her who their enemies were, Yuchi Mount himself had always trained hard, always wanting to restore his clan and strengthen himself enough to take revenge.

Yuchi Xiyue had always quietly watched her father at work. She knew that her father's desire was twofold; to re-establish the Yuchi clan, and to take revenge! Yuchi Mount was simply suppressing his desire for revenge...but his daughter could sense the hatred buried with his heart. This was why she wanted to fulfill her father's hopes...to re-establishing the clan, and to take revenge!

"Right." Ning's heart suddenly trembled. "Uncle was the last surviving man of the Yuchi clan. The amount of hatred he felt must have been tremendous. My cousin has a similar level of hate towards the Youngflame clan. What about Mother?"

"Grandpa and the others, they all died...could it be that Mother didn't feel hate?"

"But after marrying my father and marrying into my Ji clan, she never mentioned this matter. She never even displayed any hint of it in front of me. Perhaps, in private, she would feel agony and hatred on behalf of her murdered parents and kinsmen." Ning's heart suddenly ached. His mother had never passed any of the hatred she felt to him, precisely because she didn't want him to go take revenge.

She was afraid that he would become an egg that tried to smash itself against a rock!

"Mother...you were worried about me. But in the end, your son has still ended up fighting against the Youngflame clan."

"This is what destiny is!"

"Mother, if your son was nothing more than an 'ordinary' supreme genius, it would indeed be hard to take revenge...but I'm not! I have the

legacy of the primordial Fiendgod, Daoist Threelives. I can easily acquire Immortal-ranked and even Pure Yang magic items. My divine ability is a terrifying one that ranks amongst the top ten of the entire Three Realms. I absolutely have hope of being able to become a power that dominates the Three Realms. Annihilating the Youngflame clan...I can do it, I can absolutely do it!"

Resolve flashed in Ning's eyes as well.

"Cousin." Ning looked towards her.

"Little brother." Yuchi Xiyue looked towards her little brother, then said in a soft voice, "I've never spoken these words before to anyone else. When I saw you, those words that I kept hidden in my heart all came spilling out. Aside from Grandpa...you are my only family."

Ning nodded. "Cousin, don't worry. Becoming a Void-level Earth Immortal, to me, is absolutely not a problem at all. It will happen without any impediments! Even dealing with the Celestial Tribulation and becoming a Celestial Immortal...although it will be hard, I can do it. I definitely will do it. Dealing with the Youngflame clan isn't just your personal issue; it's mine as well. The Youngflame clan and I are already like fire and water; either they will extinguish me, or I'll extinguish them!"

"Little brother." Yuchi Xiyue felt a warm feeling in her heart. Although the two knew exactly how hard it would be for one to overcome the Celestial Tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal...neither of them said such things right now.

No matter what, the two of them still had their resolve.

"The two of us, brother and sister, will join hands and annihilate the Youngflame clan." Ning tightly clasped his cousin's hand.

"Right. Hand in hand, we will annihilate the Youngflame clan." Yuchi Xiyue nodded in excitement as well. "The two of us shall be of one heart, and our will shall be sharp enough to cut metal!"

"The two of us shall be of one heart, and our will shall be sharp enough

to cut metal.” Ning nodded heavily as well.

On this day. In this moment.

The Treasure Auction was still underway. Immortal Floatcloud was still on the street outside, waiting for and wanting to assassinate Ning.

Yuchi Xiyue and Ji Ning, a pair of cousins, truly joined forces against their common foe...the Youngflame clan!

With two massive azure phoenixes pulling from up ahead, an Immortal carriage, wreathed in golden flames, flew into the skies of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. There were some servants by its side, and a large amount of Golden Imperials protecting its perimeter.

Princess Xiyue and Ji Ning were both seated within the carriage. The Whitewater Hound was lying on one side, while Little Qing remained wrapped around Ning’s arm.

Just a short while ago, when Princess Xiyue had pulled Ning into the Immortal carriage, the maidservants were speaking out about how this action was inappropriate, for fear that Ning might be an assassin. Still, given how the princess always followed her own plans...there was naturally nothing they could do.

“In the imperial capital, it’s quite common for geniuses to be pulled into and share carriages as part of a befriending process,” Princess Xiyue sent mentally. “If you are going to invite a genius to be your friend, can it be that you’d seat yourself in your carriage, then have him fly alongside it? That would be a show of absolute disrespect to such a peerless genius. Am I right?”

Ning could only let out a helpless laugh.

“Don’t go take up residence in the Raindragon Guard headquarters. Although it’s safe there, there’s too many people and too many eyes. The Raindragon Guards of the Youngflame clan will definitely be keeping watch over you, and all of your actions will be under complete surveillance. Better to come to King Yan’s Estate. There will be absolutely no one who will make trouble for you,” Princess Xiyue sent mentally.

“Alright.” Ning nodded. It was true that his earlier plan had been to live at the Raindragon Guard headquarters in the imperial capital. The Raindragon Godpeak was an absolutely secure location; the Godpeak was higher than even the Skylight Palace, which meant that the martial power hidden within it was surely endlessly amazing. Not even Celestial Immortals would dare to act rashly within it.

However...plans never keep pace with events. He had run into his cousin, and so he would now go to the estate of a king of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia. Naturally, it was also extremely safe there.

“The Golden Imperials...two of them are Immortals?” Ning sent mentally.

“Little brother, you truly are impressive. Right; these hundred Golden Imperials include 98 Primal Daoists and two Loose Immortals. These are definitely the most elite soldiers amongst the Imperial Guard of the imperial capital. They had originally been bestowed upon Grandpa, who ordered them to obey my commands. This time, I only brought out two small squad. Every single squad has one Loose Immortal and 49 Primal Daoist who can join together into a Dao-soldier formation. If two squads join forces, even tens of Loose Immortals would find it difficult to defeat them,” Princess Xiyue sent mentally.

Ning sighed in amazement upon hearing this. The imperial clan of the Grand Xia truly was extraordinary in its resources.

“Later, we’ll only need to send out a single squad to annihilate that ‘Snowdragon Mountain’ you spoke of.” A fierce look flashed through Princess Xiyue’s eyes. “I’ll have Grandpa give the Northmont clan of Stillwater advance notice. They absolutely won’t argue about it. A sect that doesn’t even have a single Earth Immortal or Loose Immortal? If they get wiped out, they get wiped out.”

Ning nodded. Previously, during their discussion in the residence, they had spoken of how Yuchi Mount had been killed by Snowdragon Mountain’s men. Yu Dong and Shui Yi had already died, leaving behind only Dong Seven, who remained on Snowdragon Mountain. Because Ning

had been pursued by the Youngflame clan, he absolutely didn't dare to spend time fighting at or attacking Snowdragon Mountain. Upon being encircled and trapped there, he would be finished.

Annihilating Snowdragon Mountain? To Ji Ning, that was a bit tricky. But for Princess Xiyue? It was much easier.

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"Why isn't he out yet?" Immortal Floatcloud, who had been waiting on the streets outside for quite some time, was frowning. He had been waiting for a very long time now.

Swoosh!

Suddenly, an azure-robed servant emerged from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain headquarters, hurriedly sending mentally, "Senior, Ji Ning emerged, but he's with Princess Xiyue."

"Princess Xiyue?!" Immortal Floatcloud was flabbergasted.

Just a few seconds later, an incomparably beautiful and noble pair of azure phoenix Godbeasts flew out, pulling an Immortal carriage wreathed in golden flames. A green-robed woman was seated alongside Ning within it, and next to them lay a Whitewater Hound. In front of them and behind them was a troop of Golden Imperials, emanating powerful auras.

"But, but, but..." Immortal Floatcloud was completely poleaxed. "Two azure phoenix Godbeasts? A hundred Golden Imperials? I...how the hell am I supposed to assassinate him?"

Chapter 22: King Yan, Yama-King

The two azure phoenix Godbeasts were both comparable to supreme Loose Immortals in power. Those two squads of Golden Imperials were even mightier! Even ten Immortal Floatclouds wouldn't be able to do anything.

"What...what should I do? He's with Princess Xiyue. How am I supposed to kill him?" Immortal Floatcloud began to briefly panic, but he quickly came back to his senses. "Princess Xiyue is a woman, and she never met Ji Ning before. This is just their first meeting; she wants to befriend him, which is why they are sharing an Immortal carriage...I imagine that in a short while, they will separate, and Ji Ning will return to his residence, while Princess Xiyue will go back to her royal residence."

"I'll follow them. Once they separate, I'll kill Ji Ning." Immortal Floatcloud immediately sent a mental order to his subordinates, ordering them to follow. He stayed far away behind them, so as to avoid being discovered.

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The spies of the Youngflame clan quietly followed, only to discover that Ji Ning and Princess Xiyue actually weren't separating.

The azure phoenixes pulled the Immortal carriage whistling through the air, all the way to King Yan's Estate.

"Come." Princess Xiyue disembarked from the Immortal carriage. Ning, too, led the Whitewater Hound out of the carriage, following Princess Xiyue into the royal estate.

"Senior, Ji Ning and Princess Xiyue both entered King Yan's Estate," the spy immediately reported back.

"What?! Entered the royal estate?! Ji Ning entered King Yan's Estate?!" Immortal Floatcloud couldn't even believe it. "Keep watching! I refuse to believe he won't come out. As soon as he does, immediately report it to me."

“Yes.” The spy resumed his watch.

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King Yan’s Estate took up a large amount of space, but it was fairly cold and pristine. This was because although most kings had many friends and relatives with them, King Yan had only a single family member; Princess Xiyue. This caused the estate to feel cold and clean. Still, King Yan was a newly ascended Celestial Immortal; most likely in a thousand years or ten thousand years, this estate would become incredibly lively.

“The royal estate is quite large,” Princess Xiyue said with a laugh. “Many places are unoccupied. Later, I’ll accompany you in picking out a place.”

“Everyone says that it is hard finding a place to stay in the imperial capital, and that most Immortal cultivators can’t even afford it,” Ning laughed. “I didn’t expect that I, Ji Ning, would actually be able to pick and choose. It seems my luck isn’t bad!”

Princess Xiyue laughed as well. The two walked together, chatting and laughing. The two female soldier-servants following them were quite surprised; their princess was quite solitary and rarely made friends she could chat with. Those she did make friends with were all women. For her to chat so happily with a young man....they had never seen this before.

“Xiyue, bring Ji Ning to my place.” A voice suddenly echoed in Princess Xiyue’s mind.

“Let’s go,” Princess Xiyue said. “My Grandpa wants to see you.”

“King Yan wishes to see me?” Ning felt a surge of nervousness. He knew that King Yan was a friend and not an enemy...but he was still a Celestial Immortal! Ning had never before seen a Celestial Immortal Patriarch.

Perhaps the Lord of Cui Palace Ning had met in the Netherworld Kingdom was a Celestial Immortal, or even more powerful than a Celestial Immortal...but Ning had been a mere mortal soul, and the Lord of Cui Palace had completely hidden and suppressed his aura of power. Ning couldn’t sense the Lord of Cui Palace’s level of power at all.

Now, however, things were different. Ning was an Immortal cultivator, and his soul was comparable to a supreme Loose Immortal's. He now understood more than ever before how powerful Celestial Immortals were.

"Let's go." Princess Xiyue laughed as she pulled at Ning's hand.

"They are holding hands?!" The eyes of two female soldier-servants escorting them turned completely round. "Can the princess actually have fallen for Ji Ning?" The two were personal maidservants; although they were stunned, there was no way they would speak of what they had seen. Every single personal servant had sworn certain oaths to the Dao of the Heavens.

A very short time later. Princess Xiyue led Ning towards a graceful mountain. King Yan's Estate spanned a thousand kilometers, and so the insides of it were naturally filled with winding mountain ranges, and even some lakes and pools.

"This place, Skygazer Mountain, is the place which Grandpa likes to come to the most," Princess Xiyue said. "Servants are forbidden from coming up the mountain. Usually, I'm the only one who goes up."

"Oh?" Ning nodded.

Little Qing nand Uncle White were left at the base of the mountain, not coming up; after all, King Yan had only said that he wanted to meet with Ji Ning.

At the very summit of othe mountain peak, there was an old, gnarled, twisted tree. Next to it, there was a pavilion, which had a single table, a single chair, and a single person within it! This was a tall, muscular man who was dressed in a long black robe. He quietly sat there by himself, drinking wine and staring at the vast landscape around him.

In this moment, it seemed as though the sky, the earth, and the man were all one being.

"Grandpa," Princess Xiyue called out, her voice breaking the stillness. Only then did the man rise to his feet, turning to stare at them.

He was more than eight feet tall, and his eyebrows were crow-black and almost excessively thick. The eyes below the brows were staring straight at Ji Ning. Ning, in turn, was looking back at King Yan.

Whoosh!

Everything in the surrounding area completely vanished. Ning could only sense an infinite, baleful aura, a baleful aura that filled the skies and covered the earth, so strong as to cause even Ning to feel fear. However, Ning's soul was powerful and his Dao-heart was sturdy; his sword-soul quickly stabilized itself, allowing him to escape that state a short moment later. Ning looked at the man in front of him. "What a King Yan! He didn't even try to consciously attack me; he just revealed the baleful aura contained within his body, but it was almost enough to cause me to lose myself within it."

"Cousin said that her grandpa had only an ordinary level of talent, and wasn't even viewed as important by the imperial clan of the Grand Xia... but he dared to use evil, demonic techniques and even strengthen the demonic mental attacks of the calamities to temper himself. This is a very crazy fellow...and because of his craziness, although his talent was clearly ordinary, he managed to force his way into becoming a Celestial Immortal." Ning knew quite well that it was rare for even a single Celestial Immortal to emerge within the Grand Xia Empire over the span of a million years.

King Yan's talent had been ordinary for an Earth Immortal, but he had succeeded in becoming a Celestial Immortal. He most assuredly had his own terrifying secrets. Everything else aside, that baleful aura contained within his gaze...that alone was enough to make Ning understand that this person before him had definitely undergone terrifying experiences. Otherwise, there was no way the baleful aura could be so strong.

"Ji Ning pays his respects to you, King Yan." Ning respectfully bowed deeply.

"Not bad. You've only trained for thirty years, but your Dao-heart wasn't moved by my baleful aura; you instantly threw it off." King Yan nodded

slightly, then said with a calm smile, "Formidable, formidable."

Princess Xiyue said, surprised, "Grandpa, you just praised him as 'formidable' twice in a row? I've never seen you praise someone like that before."

"Xiyue, can it be that you don't know Grandpa's nickname?" King Yan revealed a hint of smugness in his eyes.

"You mean...Yama-King?" Xiyue said. 1

Ning revealed a puzzled look.

"Yama-King refers to the Yama Hell-Kings of the Netherworld Kingdom!" Xiyue explained. "Even I don't know why Grandpa acquired a nickname like this."

"It's precisely because I became a Celestial Immortal through a life of slaughter that my baleful aura is this strong. Otherwise, why would others call me Yama-King?" King Yan laughed smugly. In front of his only granddaughter, he acted as if he were an ordinary person; if he wanted to laugh, he would, and if he wanted to be smug, he would. And if he wanted to be unhappy, he would.

King Yan looked at Ning. "Which is why it is quite formidable that you are able to ignore the influence of my baleful aura."

"I know that you and Xiyue are maternal cousins." King Yan nodded. "I also know that enmity exists between you and the Youngflame clan. Their roots, however, are deep and stable; they won't be so easily uprooted. Xiyue hasn't even publicly acknowledged her true surname. However, you, Ji Ning, have truly gone head-on against the Youngflame clan. You need to be careful in your day-to-day life."

Ning nodded. "Understood."

"Grandpa!" Princess Xiyue immediately said, "Didn't you say that Patriarch Arcanum of the Youngflame clan doted heavily on Youngflame Nong, and would definitely take revenge for him?"

"Yes, I did say that," King Yan nodded. "Patriarch Arcanum truly is quite

an unreasonable fellow. Although I'm savage, I can be reasonable. He, however, is completely unreasonable. That's why you have to be careful."

"Don't you have more Golden Imperials under your control? Divert a squad to my little brother," Xiyue immediately pleaded.

Ning was stunned. She had never before mentioned this idea to him.

"Golden Imperials?" King an frowned. "Xiyue, the Golden Imperials belong to the Imperial Guard of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia. Generally speaking, only members of the imperial clan will have Imperial Guards with them. You are a princess, so it doesn't matter that you have them with you, but if Ji Ning were also to have them...this is..."

"Grandpa!" Princess Xiyue said frantically. "His Majesty, the Emperor, bestowed the Golden Imperials to you for you to command as you see fit, right? I'm not asking you to give my little brother all the Golden Imperials as protection, just a single squad. The laws of the imperial clan have never stated that the Golden Imperials can only protect imperial clan members."

King Yan shook his head, letting out a resigned laugh. It was true. There was no way the laws of the Grand Xia would stipulate that Golden Imperials could only protect imperial clan members. After all, even the Emperor himself had his important ministers and subjects, or formidable independent roving Immortals who he wanted to befriend. For the sake of showing his grace, he would arrange for some Golden Imperials to serve these people.

"Fine then." King Yan nodded. "I'll arrange for a squad of Golden Imperials. The worst thing that could happen is some people will mumble about it behind my back."

"Thank you, Grandpa. Grandpa, you are the best." Princess Xiyue hugged King Yan by the arm in quite the friendly manner.

"Hahaha." King Yan laughed. Only with her, his granddaughter, would he feel the warmth of family. In front of others...he would always remain the legendary Yama-King.

“Hurry up and thank my grandpa,” Princess Xiyue said, immediately looking at Ning.

“Thank you, King Yan,” Ning said hurriedly.

“Mm.” King Yan nodded, then laughed, “Go now. You are quite cautious in front of me. Xiyue, make the arrangements for your little brother. The royal estate is quite large; let him choose a place as he pleases, then have him settle down. There will definitely be no one who will dare to barge into my estate.”

“Grandpa, we’ll leave now.” Xiyue immediately pulled Ning away, and they quickly descended from Skygazer Mountain.

King Yan watched as Princess Xiyue and Ning went down the mountain. He nodded lightly. “Xiyue clearly is much happier now. She’s suppressed her hatred in her heart for too long. In the end, it is family which will allow her to become a happier person.”

King Yan then turned and sat down again. He sat there, by himself, holding a cup of wine, staring at this vast, wide world.

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They had arrived at a grassy area next to a lake. Ning nodded. “Right here. I’ll live here.”

“Here?” Princess Xiyue was flabbergasted. “But this is a barren place. There’s nothing but grass here. There’s no place to stay at all. We have plenty of residences in this royal estate...why are you going to stay in a barren grassland?”

“Watch.”

Ning waved his hand.

Whoosh! Instantly, an enormous, beautiful Immortal estate appeared, with beautiful pavilions and residences that were decorated with paintings and sculptures. Like golden jade, they stood there, emanating natural elemental ki.

“What a fine Immortal estate.” Princess Xiyue was surprised. “You can

actually carry this Immortal estate with you...it definitely can't be a cheap one."

"Right. This is an Immortal estate that one can carry at the Wanxiang level; it's worth at least half a million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence," Ning said. Actually, this Immortal estate was one which the giant yellow bear had given to Ning, free of charge; although it was a 'gift', Ning was absolutely forbidden from selling it. This was because within this Immortal estate which worth half a million kilograms, there was a region where the underwater estate was secreted.

Within the underwater estate, inside the Immortal estate, there were layers on layers of protective formations. It was definitely a completely safe spot.

"Half a million kilograms? Nice." Princess Xiyue said, "Is this Youngflame Nong's as well?"

"No. I acquired it by luck," Ning said.

"I knew it. For you to be able to kill Youngflame Nong and a Primal-level Fiendgod means that you definitely must have had some tremendous strokes of fortune." Princess Xiyue laughed, "Alright, go inside and get some rest. When night comes, I'll prepare a dinner banquet for you."

"Alright." Ning nodded.

"Get a good rest. You haven't had a chance to rest at all after arriving at the imperial capital." Princess Xiyue then led her two female soldier-servants away. As for Ning, he led Uncle White and Little Qing into his own Immortal estate.

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1. In Chinese, the 'Yan' of King Yan and the 'Yama' of Yama-King are pronounced identically, although the characters are completely different.

Chapter 23: Fivecraze Arrives

“Master, has Princess Xiyue taken a fancy to you? She’s so nice to you. She even brought you to the royal estate and had you live here.” After they entered the Immortal estate, Little Qing could no longer refrain from beginning to jabber at Ji Ning.

“Ning, son, this princess is indeed treating you quite well. I feel as though she is being sincere,” the Whitewater Hound said as well.

Ning just grinned, not explaining. The fact that his cousin’s name was Yuchi Xiyue was a major secret which she had never before revealed to her servants or spirit-beasts. Naturally, Ning wouldn’t reveal it either. Although his spirit-beasts were absolutely loyal to him, sometimes...just because a person didn’t want to reveal a secret, didn’t mean it wouldn’t end up being revealed anyhow. For example, weren’t the members of the Yuchi clan all soul-scoured?

“We’ve already established ourselves here, at the imperial capital of the Grand Xia,” Ning said. “Next, we’ll just stay for a time here at King Yan’s Estate, awaiting the Conclave of Immortal Destiny.”

“Ning, son, at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, you suppressed many challengers with your financial might, spending 2.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence to buy the peacock plumes. I trust that word of this will quickly spread, and more and more people within the imperial capital will know of you. Soon, I imagine, some major clans will invite you over,” Uncle White said.

Ning nodded. This was what he had planned to begin with. He had originally wanted to seek out various powers, so as to use their strength against the Youngflame clan. He hadn’t expected he would run into his cousin!

“There’s no harm getting to know more of the clans and tribes which are feuding against the Youngflame clan,” Ning said. “Uncle White, Little Qing, let me go train in my private room for a time. If there’s nothing important, don’t call for me.”

And then, Ning returned to his own private room. As for the underwater estate...it was secreted within that very room.

Whoosh!

Ning entered the private room. Within it, there was actually a secondary door. Upon opening it, he immediately arrived at the enormous main hall of the underwater estate, filled with those giant prayer mats.

The giant yellow bear was within the main hall, smiling as he looked at Ning. "King Yan truly is a fine fellow; earlier, when he swept his entire royal estate with his coresense, he scanned our Immortal estate as well. When he realized that there were layers of restrictive spells on it, he didn't try to send his coresense to penetrate through them."

Coresense...this was something a level higher than even 'divine sense'.

Immortal cultivators were primarily divided into two categories; the one before and the one after the Celestial Tribulation. The category before the tribulation was a category filled with misery and painstaking work, faced with the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations and countless dangers. The 'divine soul' of this level was independent; even after becoming a Primal Daoist, although the divine soul would enter the body of the Primal, it would just be nurtured there within it. The soul itself was still stand-alone and independent. Independent souls could divide into two, and the split half could be trained into a 'Primaltwin'."

The second category of Immortal cultivators was those who had overcome the Celestial Tribulation. After it, the divine soul and the Primal would truly fuse together. There would be no distinction between the two; each would be part of the other. This was a true transformative change, and over the process of it, the 'coresense' would emerge as well.

This was a form of power that was even more formidable than 'divine sense'. A form of power that was able to touch on the hidden, underworld currents of fate and destiny.

"This royal estate is his territory, after all; some Celestial Immortals will carefully investigate everything which is brought onto their estate, or even force their way in to take a look. King Yan, however, went out of his

way to avoid scanning this estate again.” The giant yellow bear nodded in approval; clearly, he was quite approving of the way this King Yan acted.

“If he insisted on using his coresense to investigate?” Ning asked.

“I could forcibly deny him,” the giant yellow bear said. “Or, I could allow his coresense in and let him believe that he had already found everything, when in reality, he would be ridiculously wrong.”

Ning nodded. He then sat down in the lotus position, and with a wave of his hand, produced the five peacock plumes. The peacock plumes emanated powerful ripples of might that were not one whit weaker than that of an ordinary Immortal-ranked magic treasure. The space and world around them even seemed to begin to congeal. Still, compared to the Thousandbull Sword, it was still rather weaker.

“What a pity. A peacock with plumes that manifested from the Five Elements actually died at the Void-level. If he had overcome the Celestial Tribulation, the various major powers of the Three Realms would probably fight over him as a mount,” the giant yellow bear sighed. “The more monstrously powerful a Godbeast is, the harder it is for them to overcome the Celestial Tribulation.”

“...a mount?” Ning was speechless. Poor Godbeast; his destiny was just to become a mount at best?

Ning then stretched out both of his arms, beginning to absorb the extracted essence of the Five Elements contained within the five peacock plumes.

Ning executed a special technique, and his palms began to be covered with the Divine Starseizer Runes. The divine runes glowed with light, and the round runes began to spin, vaguely generating a devouring power that seemed to fill the region. The Five Elements peacock plumes began to try and resist, not willing to allow the essence of the Five Elements within themselves be lost.

However, these were nonliving items; how could they overcome the technique? Slowly, one strand after another of essence was extracted from and flew out of the five peacock plumes. The strands were golden, azure,

watery-blue, fire-red, and dark yellow. The five types of essence continuously flew out and into Ning's twin hands.

Slowly, Ning's entire body began to send out one ripple of power after another as well.

Time passed on. The five-colored essences continuously flew into Ning's hands. After a long period of time, Ning finally put his hands down, halting the absorption process.

"That's enough." After having absorbed enough of the Five Elements essence, Ning began to activate another technique. Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! His twin hands began to emanate a blinding, pentacolor aura of light. The strength of the light was incomparably strong! His hands were no longer ordinary items; they were more like magic treasures, and the powerful ripples emanating from them vastly surpassed those given off by Heaven-ranked magic items in power.

Slowly, the pentacolored aura of light swiveled and spun into Ning's palms, transforming into a chaotic mash of colors. Immediately afterwards, the round divine tattoos on Ning's palms once more began to expand and become even more profound, with some additional, complicated diagrams appearing. As they did so, the ripples emanating from them began to grow even more terrifyingly strong.

"The [Six Cycles of the Starseizer]...the second Cycle is completed!" Ning revealed a look of delight.

"Whew." Ning clenched his fists. BOOM! BOOM! Both fists exploded with power, causing sonic booms. Even the surrounding space, which had been congealed and frozen by the Five Elements peacock plumes, trembled and shook, with the energy within beginning to fluctuate.

"My pair of hands...they are far more powerful than even Heaven-ranked magic items. They are comparable to Immortal-ranked magic items now." Ning sighed in amazement. "From the first Cycle to the second Cycle...it truly is a major rise in power. Only after training to the second Cycle can my Fiendgod body truly explode with the power it should have."

Actually, the true [Starseizing Hand] technique was to transform one's hands into weapons. When receiving the legacy, Ning had seen one image after another of Daoist Threelives using his own hands to launch attacks! The hands of Daoist Threelives were more terrifying than any magic treasure. He had no need of any magic treasures. His hands were the most powerful of magic treasures.

Ning, however, used his hands to control his swords!

“Ji Ning, after having mastered the second Cycle, your [Starseizing Hand] has already reached the highest level of power which your current Fiendgod body can withstand.” The giant yellow bear nodded and said praisingly, “Train harder. You are only at the eleventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]; if you were to train to the twelfth stage, then you would have an even better chance at the Conclave of Immortal Destiny.”

“Senior, if I use the [Starseizing Hand] at the Conclave...wouldn't I be revealing myself? Supposedly, the Conclave will attract attention from some of the most formidable figures of the Three Realms,” Ning said.

“Don't worry. As long as you don't reveal the Divine Starseizer Tattoos, they won't be able to realize what you are doing, no matter how many times you use the technique,” the giant yellow bear said with a laugh. “At most, they'll believe that you have access to some sort of powerful divine ability or secret art...or perhaps they'll believe that your weapons, the Darknorth Swords, are incredibly powerful. There's no way they'll be able to guess at the true might of your divine ability.”

Ning nodded.

“There's no major power who, just by glancing at your physical body, can recognize the divine ability you are using,” the giant yellow bear said. “Unless it's one of those special attack divine abilities, or those divine abilities that allow the body to instantaneously increase in size. Those are all immediately recognizable. Aside from that, it's incredibly hard to recognize the vast majority of divine abilities.”

“Eh?” The giant yellow bear frowned. “Someone is coming.”

Ning could sense it as well. A servant had arrived outside the gates to his Immortal estate. "I'll take a look," Ning said.

Swoosh.

Ning quickly arrived at the gates to his Immortal estate. The servant outside it said respectfully, "Outside our royal estate, a short old man who styles himself 'Immortal Fivecraze' wishes to see you, milord."

"Immortal Fivecraze?" Ning was startled, but he immediately said, "Understood."

Outside the gates to King Yan's Estate. There was a rather sloppily dressed short elder who was waiting here. As Ning appeared at the gates, Ning immediately cried out in delight, "Patriarch."

"Ji Ning." Immortal Fivecraze beamed as well.

"Please, come in, Patriarch." Ning hurriedly led the way. "Come to my place."

"Alright." Immortal Fivecraze nodded.

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Immortal Floatcloud had been waiting outside this entire time, waiting for a good opportunity to assassinate Ji Ning.

"Senior, Ji Ning has arrived at the gates to the royal estate."

"Is he coming out?" Immortal Floatcloud grew eager and excited.

"No. He went back inside. It seems he was welcome a short, sloppy-looking old man."

"Keep watching for me." Immortal Floatcloud was beginning to grow a bit frantic. When he had sworn the oath to the Dao of the Heavens, he had said that he would kill Ji Ning within three days; else, his soul would be shattered. If Ji Ning continued to hide within King Yan's estate for three days and refused to come out, then Immortal Floatcloud would have no choice but to allow his soul to be destroyed.

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Ji Ning led Immortal Fivecraze back to his own Immortal estate, preparing Immortal wine and fruit for him.

“Patriarch, how did you know I was here at King Yan’s Estate?” Ning said with a laugh.

“I came here for the express purpose of seeking you out,” Immortal Fivecraze said.

“Seeking me out?” Ning was surprised.

Immortal Fivecraze nodded. “Right. Your master, Immortal Diancai, has gone out adventuring. Before doing so, he asked us to all give you a hand. Our Black-White College is unable to help you directly fight against the Youngflame clan. The only thing we can do...is give some of the secret arts and manuals of the school to you. We wanted to do so, but we weren’t able to find you. Just now, we received word that you had appeared in the Heavenly Treasures Mountain of the imperial capital. Only after I arrived at and searched everywhere in the Heavenly Treasures Mountain did I learn that you had entered King Yan’s Estate.”

“I’ve brought scrolls for your Ki Refining Technique and your Fiendgod Body Refining Techniques over,” Immortal Fivecraze said. “Also the divine abilities and secret arts of our College; I’ve brought all of them as well. Look at and memorize all of them; after memorizing each one, destroy it.”

As he spoke, thirty six formation flags suddenly appeared in midair around them. As they hovered there, they emanated a series of pulses of light which covered the region.

“Not even Celestial Immortals can think about spying on you.” Immortal Fivecraze looked at Ji Ning. “Hurry up and view them.” As he spoke, he offered them to Ning.

Ning was speechless. So Immortal Fivecraze had hurried all the way from Stillwater Commandery to deliver him divine abilities and secret arts?

“Don’t stand there like a fool. You are a student of the Black-White College; you are supposed to be able to train in these anyhow. The point

of those so-called black-white pellets is just to ensure that you will work hard and test yourself. We can't just give everything to you without making you work for it, right?" Immortal Fivecraze sighed. "This is all the Black-White College can do for you now..."

Chapter 24: Invitation

Ji Ning's eyes stung.

After killing Youngflame Nong, Ning had never hoped for the Black-White College to help him, their disciple. In truth, he felt guilt towards the Black-White College. Because of him...the relationship between the Black-White College and the Youngflame clan had almost assuredly turned quite stiff. Thus, Ning had only planned to rely on his own power to fight against the Youngflame clan.

"Master...Master went out adventuring?" Ning asked, worried.

"Right. Your matter...your master is unable to assist you in resolving it. This had a tremendous impact on your master. In addition, he isn't certain of his ability to overcome the Celestial Tribulation. Thus, he is going to go out and adventure and temper himself." Immortal Fivecraze said with a sigh, "However...how can the matters of the world always go as you desire them to go? Your master is too stubborn and fixated."

Ning didn't say a word.

"Hurry up and read." Immortal Fivecraze handed the [Flowing Watersource] to Ning.

"Right." Ning nodded. No matter how many thoughts he had in his mind, given his power was insufficient, those thoughts were useless.

"In the past life, or in this life...my goal is to have my destiny in my own hands." That powerful desire filling Ning's heart continued to cause his Dao-heart to grow firmer. He flipped through the second half of the [Flowing Watersource], memorizing it carefully. After doing so, a flame emerged from Ning's hand which completely burned the book into ash. Next, Immortal Fivecraze gave him the third scroll for the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens].

The full copy of the [Flowing Watersource]. The third scroll of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. The full copy of [Heavenly Transformation]. The full copy of the [Divine Thunderbolt

Eye]. The full copy of the [Myriad Hibernating Venoms]. The full copy of [Three Heads, Six Arms]. The full copy of the [Eye of the Luminous Heart]. The full copy of the [Soulshaker Art]. The full copy of the [Soulcharmer Art]. The full copy of the [Soulslayer Art].

This was what Immortal Fivecraze had brought him. Almost all of the most important divine abilities and secret arts of the Black-White College; he had brought them all for Ning.

After each read, Ning would burn the book.

Some of the divine abilities took up ten full books. Immortal cultivators had utterly astonishing memories, but Ning still needed to read all the way to the dawn of the next day before completely memorizing all of the techniques. But of course, halfway through the process, Ning had taken a break and taken the Patriarch to participate in the dinner banquet which Princess Xiyue had prepared for him.

“No need to see me off.”

Ning was at the gates to the royal estate, sending off Immortal Fivecraze.

“Ji Ning...” Immortal Fivecraze looked towards Ning, then said with a laugh, “Last night, I could tell from the banquet that King Yan treats you with great importance. He is a Celestial Immortal Patriarch, and yet he views you so highly; you need to work hard! Every bit of help the Black-White College can possibly give you, we have already! As for myself, I’m just trying to overcome as many tribulations as I can before succumbing. I don’t have much time left to me. I truly hope to be able to see one of the disciples of the Black-White College become a Celestial Immortal. Your master is striving to do this; you need to as well.”

“Right.” Ning nodded.

“In the imperial capital, when you are alone, you need to be careful.” Immortal Fivecraze cracked a smile. “Since you are going to the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, you need to go all out. If you can apprentice yourself to a major power of the Three Realms...by then, the Youngflame clan will be completely stupefied.”

“Right. I’m going to go all out.” Ning nodded.

“Alright. I’m leaving now.” Immortal Fivecraze turned and left. He was holding up his calabash of wine, appearing to be quite relaxed and at ease. Moments later, he disappeared from Ning’s field of vision.

Ning took a deep breath. In this moment...Ning felt an incomparably powerful sense of belonging for the Black-White College.

“No matter how much time passes...I, Ji Ning, shall forever be a disciple of the Black-White College.” These were the words Ning said silently to himself.

And then, Ning turned and returned to the estate.

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“Senior, Ji Ning came to the entrance of the royal estate.”

“He’s coming out?” Immortal Floatcloud asked frantically.

“He just went back inside again.”

Immortal Floatcloud’s face was filled with indisguisable frantiness. He barked, “Keep watching!”

Although he was a Loose Immortal, and although he was extremely patient...he had already sworn an oath to the Dao of the Heavens before Patriarch Arcanum. He had to kill Ji Ning within three days.

“It’s already been a day and a half!” Immortal Floatcloud said frantically to himself, “Ji Ning, oh, Ji Ning...are you going to stay inside the entire time? Then my death will really have been for nothing.”

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Within King Yan’s Estate. The underwater estate.

“Ji Ning, that fellow named Fivecraze brought over quite a few divine abilities and secret arts. The secret arts are one thing; you can do as you please. But of the divine abilities, you absolutely cannot train in the [Myriad Hibernating Venoms]. Absolutely not,” the giant yellow bear said.

“Eh?” Ji Ning said, surprised, “This [Myriad Hibernating Venoms] is said

to be one of the most powerful divine abilities the Black-White College possesses; the cost in black-white pellets is as high as the [Eye of the Luminous Heart]. They are the most expensive of all. And isn't it better to have as many divine abilities as possible? There shouldn't be any issues."

The giant yellow bear shook his head. "Yes, the more divine abilities the better, but...training in divine abilities will distract you take up your time, won't it? As for the [Myriad Hibernating Venoms], you will need to use more than ten thousand types of strange venoms in order to train in it. Searching for and acquiring so many venoms will cost you a great deal, and merging those venoms into your body is extremely troublesome. It will cost you a lot of effort, for little gain! In addition, the more pure a divine body is, the better; fusing so many venoms into your body isn't worth shit. In the future, after you become an Empyrean God, you'd probably have to actually purify your body of those venoms and actively wipe out the traces of this divine ability from it."

Ning was speechless.

"What about the other divine abilities?" Ning hurriedly asked.

"[Heavenly Transformation] and [Three Heads, Six Arms]; virtually all of the Fiendgods of the Three Realms train in these two divine abilities. Although they are very common, they are still quite useful," the giant yellow bear said. "You are definitely going to train in them. As for the rest? Didn't you already acquire the [Pentabolt Vajra]? You can train in both the [Pentabolt Vajra] and the [Divine Thunderbolt Eye], and the two can actually support each other, causing both to grow stronger. In addition, in reality, this [Divine Thunderbolt Eye] is in reality the foundation for one of the supreme divine abilities of the Three Realms, the [Thundergod's Eye]."

Ning laughed, "So it really is true that having an old man at home is like having a treasure."

"Yep. So you, you little tyke, need to be more polite to me," the giant yellow bear said smugly.

"How powerful is that [Thundergod's Eye] you spoke of, the one you said

is a supreme divine ability of the Three Realms?” Ning asked, curious.

“Amongst the countless divine abilities of the Three Realms, it can rank in the top hundred, I suppose. It’s on a lower level than your [Starseizing Hand],” the giant yellow bear said. “But it’s still quite powerful. Anyone who can completely master the [Thundergod’s Eye] will become a major figure of the Three Realms.”

Ning nodded. During the past year, he had already trained the [Pentabolt Vajra], [Soldiers of the Mind], and [Three Heads, Six Arms] to a very high level.

“There’s still more than a year from now until the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. I need to reach a certain level of accomplishment in the [Divine Thunderbolt Eye], the [Soulcharmer Art], and the [Soulslayer Art],” Ning mused to himself.

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“Open.”

Ning let out a loud shout within the underwater estate’s main hall. His forehead suddenly split apart, revealing a vertical eye-slit. A bolt of thunder snaked out from it, crashing against the ground of the distant hallway.

“Eh? Someone’s coming? It’s not even dark; dinner hasn’t even begun. Why has a servant come?” With a thought, Ning willed the Divine Thunderbolt Eye in his forehead to close. He had just reached a basic level of understanding of this technique, but the power was already quite something.

Ning arrived at the entrance to the Immortal estate, with Uncle White and Little Qing hurriedly following.

“What is it?” Ning asked.

The female soldier-servant at the gate said with a laugh, “The Princess is asking you to meet her, young master.”

“Oh?” Ning nodded. “Uncle White, Little Qing, I’m going to make a

short trip.”

Soon, Ning arrived at his cousin’s residence. She was currently within her pavilion, and in her hands she held a leather scroll that was covered with golden light.

“All of you, leave,” Yuchi Xiyue instructed. Soon, the entire courtyard was emptied, save for Ning and Yuchi Xiyue.

“Little brother, after you went to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain and tossed out 2.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence to buy the peacock plumes, word of you spread. Many in the imperial capital now know about you.” Yuchi Xiyue handed the golden leather scroll to Ning. “So, someone has already come to invite you to attend a banquet.”

Ning accepted it and took a glance.

“Kindwater clan?” Ning’s eyes lit up. Ning had already purchased intelligence reports regarding the various major powers of the imperial capital. Although he didn’t know the details, he knew the rough situation.

“The Kindwater clan and the Youngflame clan are mortal enemies! In addition, the Kindwater clan is even more powerful than the Youngflame clan.” Yuchi Xiyue laughed. “According to the stories, back in the Fiendgod Era, the Kindwater clan led a large number of tribes, as did the Xiamang clan. The Xiamang clan and the Kindwater clan fought for a long period of time before the Kindwater clan finally submitted to them.”

Ning sighed in amazement. He didn’t know about the hidden histories such as these.

“Back in the Fiendgod Era, the Kindwater clan even declared themselves as emperors!” Yuchi Xiyue sighed, moved. “Even after submitting, they still remain one of the top three clans of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty.”

Ning knew about this part. As for the leader of the top three clans, that was of course the imperial Xiamang clan! It was they who had unified and controlled the world.

As for the second and the third, they were the Kindwater clan and the Blackgod clan.

“The Kindwater clan and the Youngflame clan have an enormous feud between them. And the first one to invite me really is the Kindwater clan.” Ning laughed. “Right. This invited you as well, cousin; they asked you to accompany me tonight.”

“I won’t go. Although they invited me, that was just to be polite. I’ve never liked to get too involved with them,” Yuchi Xiyue said, shaking her head. “Don’t force me.”

“Then I won’t try and compel you, cousin.” Ning nodded.

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Ji Ning led the Whitewater Hound and Little Qing to the gates of the royal estate. Outside, fifty Golden Imperials were already congregating.

“Our respects to you, young master.” The leader of the Imperials, Immortal Plumerider, said.

“Sorry to trouble you, fellow Daoist Plumerider,” Ning said.

“This is no trouble. We are at the command of King Yan; naturally, we will strive to do our utmost to protect you, young master,” Immortal Plumerider said.

Ning waved his hand, and instantly, a large ship appeared. This was a large ship that was ancient and unadorned, and yet faintly radiated a threatening presence. This was one of the treasures which Immortal Juhua had left behind; it was a construct-ship, and was quite a bit more valuable than even the black dragon carriage that Youngflame Nong had.

“Let’s go.” Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing all boarded the large ship.

Whoooooosh. The crowd of Golden Imperials boarded as well. In a very practiced manner, the Golden Imperials quickly assumed positions throughout the ship, all of them vigilant and continuously scanning the area.

The warship immediately released crushing waves of energy as it began to fly towards the place which the Kindwater clan had invited Ning to meet at. This was a place that could be considered one of the most

exquisite of entertainment venues; Cloudwater Manor.

Swoosh.

Immortal Floatcloud appeared in midair, staring at the distant, enormous warship flying through the skies. The Golden Imperials standing aboard the warship caused him even more frustration.

“My three day deadline is growing closer and closer. He finally came out, but why...why is he bringing a squad of Golden Imperials with him? How am I supposed to kill him when he is protected by Golden Imperials?” True panic was in the eyes of Immortal Floatcloud now. He truly didn’t want to end up having no chance to attack, and then being punished by the Dao of the Heavens by having his soul shattered.

That would be too unjust!

Chapter 25: Cloudwater Manor

Cloudwater Manor. It was built over the massive Ninesun Lake. Wreathed by clouds and mist, it appeared like an abode for Immortals, built amidst the clouds.

A large, plain, ancient-looking warship came cruising forward, flying towards the Cloudwater Manor.

“Is this young master Ji Ning?” An attendant had been waiting for quite some time, outside the Cloudwater Manor.

Ning, leading a group of Golden Imperials, disembarked from the warship. With a wave of his hand, he collected it, then walked to the long-awaiting, white-robed, youthful-looking Primal Daoist. He said, “I am Ji Ning.”

“Per orders from my young master, I have been here awaiting you, young master Ji Ning. Young master Ji Ning, please follow me.” The white-robed youth gave the Golden Imperials behind Ning a glance. His eyelids couldn’t help but twitch. Someone who could summon a troop of Golden Imperials when travelling... was definitely no ordinary person. He was absolutely someone with a background, with a backer!

For those important officials and senior ministers, the backer was the Emperor of the Grand Xia himself; that was why they would be bestowed with a squad of Golden Imperials. In turn, only the important figures of the imperial clan would be bestowed with Golden Imperials. The only reason Ning had a troop of Golden Imperials was because behind him stood King Yan!

“This Cloudwater Manor is quite awe-inspiringly majestic.” A little azure serpent was wrapped around Ning’s arm, while by his side was a large, snowy white dog. Behind him was a large group of Golden Imperials. This impressive troop moved through the Cloudwater Manor, moving swiftly and unopposed as they glided many kilometers each moment.

The white-robed youth who was leading the way said with a laugh,

“Cloudwater Manor was only completed after our Kindwater clan spent countless treasures and three years of time. After its initial creation, countless years of time were spent to carefully carve and sculpt it. Only after all these efforts did the Cloudwater Manor before you come into being.”

“The Kindwater clan lives up to its name. Formidable, formidable,” Ning said in praise.

This was a mighty tribe which had once been able to struggle against even the imperial Xiamang clan over control of the world, a clan that absolutely ranked amongst the top three clans of this major world. Its roots were unfathomably deep. One could tell this just by looking at the many restrictive formations set up on a building like Cloudwater Manor, which was most likely on par with some of the main headquarters of other supreme clans. The Kindwater clan had indeed spent boundless effort on Cloudwater Manor, as the largest business building the Kindwater clan owned within the imperial capital. Ning’s praise for it truly came from the heart.

The white-robed youth, hearing Ning’s praise, couldn’t help but smile. He then said, “The young master is right up ahead. He’s prepared a banquet long ago, and is awaiting you, young master Ji Ning.”

“It seems I am late,” Ning laughed.

Soon, they arrived at a long pathway that hung in the air. As they walked through the pathway, they could look down and see the rippling waves of the lake, as well as the mist that filled the entire place...

This corridor led to an enormous building that was at least three thousand meters high. This building was standalone, and the Cloudwater Manor had only a single corridor that led to it.

In front of the doors to the building, there were two servants standing guard. These servants were both Wanxiang Adepts. Upon seeing the white-robed youth, they immediately pushed the door open with tremendous courtesy.

“The young master is right inside,” the white-robed youth laughed.

“This place is fairly secluded, and it has a wonderful view of the beautiful scenery of the Ninesuns Lake.”

Ning led his troop of Golden Imperials in, and the door closed behind them.

“Hahaha, brother Ji Ning truly is extraordinary. Just a short while ago, you spent 2.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence to purchase the peacock plumes, causing your name to be spread throughout the imperial capital. Now, shortly after entering King Yan’s Estate, you actually re-emerged with a squad of Golden Imperials. I have no choice but to be in awe of you, so much so that I might prostrate myself before you. Songspear, how about you?” A slightly frivolous voice spoke out.

A youth dressed in loose white-robos walked over barefooted, his long hair casually unbound. His eyes had a seemingly drunk look in them, appearing to be quite hazy. His face, however, was covered with a warm smile as he came to welcome them.

Next to his side was a tall, muscular, black-robed youth. This tall youth nodded as well. “I am in awe as well. King Yan is notorious for being unapproachable. He’s quite cold and grim. There are truly very few youngsters who he views with importance. For brother Ji Ning to be able to emerge in just two short days with a squad of Golden Imperials...he truly is formidable.”

Of the two, the white-robed, barefoot youth appeared to be a bit more of a dandy, and he seemed to be quite free and relaxed. As for the other, the tall, muscular, black-robed youth, he emanated a sharp, fierce aura.

Behind the two was a man and a woman, who followed them.

“You praise me too much,” Ning laughed. His invitation to the Cloudwater Manor had come from Kindwater Xiaolou. Ning naturally knew of Kindwater Xiaolou, one of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital. The white-robed, barefooted youth was Kindwater Xiaolou. Although he and Youngflame Nong shared the same reputation of being one of the ‘Four Dukelings’ of the imperial capital, their clans were

mortal enemies, and so the two naturally had been on extremely tense terms.

Normally, they struggled quite viciously against each other. Still, in turns of resources, personal ability, connections, or tribal strength, Kindwater Xiaolou was superior to Youngflame Nong.

“Brother Ji Ning.” The white-robed, barefoot Kindwater Xiaolou warmly took Ning by the hand. “Come, let me make some introductions.”

Kindwater Xiaolou pointed towards the tall, muscular, black-robed youth. “This person is the truly peerless genius of the younger generation of the Skyfarmer clan – Skyfarmer Songspear! Songspear isn’t like me; I often go out and party, but Songspear is quite low-key. He focuses on his training, and often goes out to temper himself through adventuring. In fact, he’s almost never in the imperial capital. The only reason he’s here right now is the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. Since he just so happened to hear about your matters as well, Ji Ning, and was curious about you, he told me that he wanted to meet with you.”

“Skyfarmer Songspear?” Ning was secretly surprised. Amongst those who were believed to have a good chance of ranking number one in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny were the likes of Xiamang Zishan, Cangwu Jiu, Adept Woodpass, and some other exceedingly famous people. Although Skyfarmer Songspear was comparatively speaking much more low-key, he was still the most outstanding figure amongst the younger generation members of the Skyfarmer clan, and was believed to definitely rank in the top hundred, and in fact was a genius likely to be able to explode forth with tremendous power. He was too low-key, causing others to be unable to be certain of his current level of power.

“Brother Ji Ning.” Songspear laughed.

“Brother Songspear.” Since the man had warmly greeted him as ‘brother Ji Ning’, Ning naturally wouldn’t treat him coldly. If he were to foolishly respond to him as ‘fellow Daoist Songspear’, then the man would probably think Ning was not giving him face.

“Come, come, come. Let me introduce you to another person who is

taking part in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny.” Xiaolou pointed to a man behind him. This man was dressed in violet robes, and his skin was pure white and incomparably beautiful. His eyes even seemed to have a hint of devilishness to them. “This is a good friend which I met many years ago; Xiao Lang. He’s definitely one of the most famous of playboys; in the imperial capital, quite a few maidens are completely smitten with him, wanting to marry him.”

“So he is Xiao Lang?” Ning said to himself. Xiao Lang was recorded in his intelligence records as well. He was quite dissolute, and his temperament was a bit bizarre. Still, in the Heavenly Treasures Mountain’s reports, he was a figure who was only mentioned; there was no way he could compare with Skyfarmer Songspear.

“My respects to you, fellow Daoist Ji Ning.” Xiao Lang looked at Ning, clasping his hands in greeting, a smile that wasn’t a smile on his face.

“Fellow Daoist Xiao Lang.” Ning nodded as well.

The nearby Songspear said with a laugh, “I have a good friend as well. I met her while adventuring in the outside world, and she came back with me to the imperial capital on this trip. She is also going to participate in the Conclave.” As he spoke, the alluring, red-robed woman behind him walked forward. “Wavecolor greets you, fellow Daoist Ji Ning.”

“Fellow Daoist Wavecolor,” Ning greeted her as well.

Kindwater Xiaolou, Skyfarmer Songspear, Xiao Lang, Wavecolor. Ning secretly sighed in amazement; all four of these figures were extraordinary.

Xiao Lang was a dissolute figure with a strange personality and a bizarre temperament.

Wavecolor was a figure who was quite famous in the Northern Seas. However, her fame came primarily due to her beauty.

“Come, let’s sit over there,” Kindwater Xiaolou said.

The Golden Imperials, Little Qing, and Uncle White sat down to one side. There were sitting mats specially prepared for them as well. As for

Xiaolou, Songspear, Xiao Lang, Wavecolor, and Ji Ning, they walked to another place.

There, all five of them sat down.

“I had originally planned to invite you, brother Ji Ning, to go stay with me at the Kindwater Estate. I didn’t expect that you would have ended up staying at King Yan’s Estate so quickly.” Xiaolou let out a very regretful sigh, then laughed, “If you ever are dissatisfied with your accommodations, you can move out and come stay at my Kindwater Estate.”

“King Yan treats me with great kindness, and he cares greatly about me. He’s also bestowed Golden Imperials onto me; how can I possibly disappoint him like that?” Ning laughed.

This was what he and his cousin had decided on as their cover story. To the outside world, they would only say that King Yan cared about Ji Ning!

“It’s true.” Xiaolou nodded. He didn’t truly expect to be able to pull Ning over to his side; he was just speaking casually.

“Glug.” Xiao Lang, seated to one side, drained his cup of wine. He thought to himself, “This Ji Ning’s only trained for thirty years. How formidable can he be? He simply managed to kill Youngflame Nong and acquire many treasures, then spent 2.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence to purchase the peacock plumes. That’s the only reason why he’s famous in the imperial capital. His luck really is good, though; Princess Xiyue took a liking to him and brought him to King Yan’s Estate. Given how much King Yan’s temperament and how much he dotes on Princess Xiyue...I imagine that it was she who asked King Yan to send a squad of Golden Imperials to follow Ji Ning around.”

Xiao Lang looked down on Ji Ning. He had been adventuring for many years, and he was much more famous than Ning! This time, he wanted to truly shine during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny!

Ji Ning? A little fellow who only grew famous through killing Youngflame Nong, and who relied on a woman to make King Yan care about him.

Actually, in his heart, Xiao Lang felt some jealousy...because Ning was able to produce 2.5 million kilograms, while he, Xiao Lang, wasn't even close to be able to doing that. Ning was also able to command a squad of Golden Imperials; how majestic and awe-inspiring as that? Although Xiao Lang was now living in the Kindwater Estate, how could he move about in as majestic a manner as Ning?

"Lucky punk. You aren't strong enough. When enough time passes, others will discover that you are nothing more than lead covered by gold paint." Xiao Lang drank there by himself. He couldn't be bothered to even chat with Ning.

.....

Xiao Lang was a strange, eccentric figure to begin with. Others didn't think anything of this; amongst Immortal cultivators, there were many with far more bizarre temperaments than him.

Ning, Xiaolou, Songspear, and Wavecolor were chatting quite happily amongst themselves.

"Ji Ning, Cloudwater Manor just recently purchased some strange creatures, all of which came from one of the lesser worlds. This lesser world is quite unique; there are thousands of types of bizarre lifeforms within it. These two can be considered some exceptionally powerful creatures of this lesser world; each of them are comparable to peak Wanxiang Adepts in power."

Kindwater Xiaolou pointed towards the large arena, more than three hundred meters in diameter, up ahead. There were people carrying enormous metal cages towards it. Within one of the two metal cages was a golden-haired giant who was more than ten meters tall, while in the other was and a strange creature with the lower body of a lion and the upper body of a human.

"Let's watch these creatures fight each other. It can be considered someone amusing." Xiaolou clapped his hands.

Instantly, a rumbling sound could be heard. A grand sealing formation instantly covered the entire arena. Within it, with clanking sounds, the

cages were automatically unlocked. The golden-haired giant, clad only in beast furs, came charging out from his cage, with the sphinx charging out of the other.

Chapter 26: Provocation

Kindwater Xiaolou, Ji Ning, Skyfarmer Songspear, and the others each held cups of wine, chatting while watching the battles going on in the center of the arena.

Within the grand sealing formation, the golden-haired giant and the sphinx both charged out of their pens, then raised their heads and let out bellows. Although the sound of their bellows was blocked out by the grand sealing formation, the sonic booms were visible from outside.

“Their physical bodies are quite powerful. They should be fairly low-level Fiendgod Body Refiners of a sort.” Fairy Wavecolor laughed, instantly transforming into a rupturing sight that caused both the golden-haired giant and the sphinx to stare, stunned, at the alluring woman outside the formation.

“Even creatures of other races find it hard to withstand Fairy Wavecolor’s allure,” Kindwater Xiaolou laughed.

But soon, the golden-haired giant and the sphinx regained their faculties. The two now stared fixedly at each other. Ever since the day they had been seized and brought to this Watercloud Manor, they had been told by the staff: “One of you must die in every single battle. If you survive nine in a row, you’ll be able to leave, and you’ll become a soldier for our Kindwater clan.”

The golden-haired giant and the sphinx, in their own respective lesser world, were supreme experts who normally had a group of servants following them. Ever since that group of terrifying Immortal cultivators had arrived in their world, however, they had quickly been subjugated, and the two had become slaves...then sold off to this ‘Kindwater’ clan. When this had happened, they discovered, to their amazement, that virtually every single servant of the Kindwater clan was more powerful than them.

They felt utter despair. They no longer harbored any hopes for escape. They had no choice but to obey. They hoped for just one thing – to survive

the nine battles, and then become soldiers of the Kindwater clan!

“Goldsea clansman, prepare to die.” The sphinx bellowed, then sent its four limbs flying forward as it transformed into a tornado that pounced towards the golden-haired giant.

“It is you who shall die!” The giant bent down, charging forward as well.

BOOM!

The two collided head on. The sphinx left a bloody wound on the chest of the golden-haired giant, while the giant’s fist smashed hard against the head of the sphinx. Blood splattered everywhere.

The wounds of both combatants quickly closed, and they continued to battle.

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“They are indeed Fiendgod Refiners.” Ning nodded.

“The cultivators of that lesser world are all Fiendgod Refiners,” Xiaolou said. “Still, they use the most low level of Fiendgod Body Refining techniques. Supposedly, the three most powerful figures of that lesser world were three Fiendgod Body Refiners that were roughly at the Primal level. They also have extremely poor comprehensions of the Dao. Any Primal Daoist of our Grand Xia Dynasty could use magic treasures to effortlessly take care of those three ‘strongest’ figures from that lesser world.”

Ning nodded. Ki Refiners required an extremely high level of comprehension of the Dao so as to control elemental ki well. As for Fiendgod Body Refiners, comparatively speaking, there wasn’t as high a requirement in terms of the Dao. Of course, the most supreme [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] had a ridiculously high level of demand regarding the Dao. Some of those comparatively poorer techniques, especially those which could be described as the weakest of Fiendgod Body Refining techniques, had no requirements with regards to understanding the Dao at all. However, with such a poor foundation, it was naturally hard for one to reach a very high level of insight. Training

to the Wanxiang level was essentially the limit; to reach the Primal level as an Fiendgod Body Refiner was a stroke of tremendous luck.

“Their close combat abilities are roughly at the ‘one with the world’ level,” Skyfarmer Songspear laughed.

“Victory is about to be determined,” Xiaolou said.

The sphinx let out a savage bellow, charging forward repeatedly with paws flying and hands grappling.

But the golden-haired giant was clearly more nimble, sometimes appearing on the left, other times appearing on the right. He left behind one massive, gaping wound after the other on the body of the sphinx, using up the sphinx’s divine power.

“Whoosh!” The golden-haired giant brushed past those trampling paws, at the same time stabbing his right hand directly into the chest of the sphinx, as though his hand was a knife.

Slash!

The chest was ripped open, and blood flew everywhere.

Bang! The sphinx swiped out with both hands, and the golden-haired giant hurriedly moved to block, in the end being knocked flying by the blow.

“Hahaha...” the golden-haired giant laughed wildly, then continued to encircle and strike at the sphinx with lightning-fast blows, leaving behind massive wounds on his body each time. In the end, the sphinx’s divine power was used up, and his wounds would no longer close. His speed dropped as well.

Crunch. The golden-haired giant was like a golden bolt of lightning; he howled through the air, then caught the sphinx’s head and gave it a hard twist. The head was forcibly ripped off.

Picking up and hoisting the head aloft with one hand, the golden-haired giant looked as though he was a victorious general. As for the sphinx, its body slumped to the ground with a thud, blood staining the ground.

Whoosh. The grand sealing formation disappeared, and the servants of the Cloudwater Manor hurriedly moved forward to quickly scrub the ground clean. The sphinx's body was disposed of as well, and soon, the arena was now completely spotless once more.

"Reporting to the young master," a manager of the Cloudwater Manor said respectfully while standing within the arena, "This golden-haired giant has already won nine consecutive victories. According to the rules, he is now a soldier of our Kindwater clan."

The golden-haired giant was standing obediently to the side of that Cloudwater Manor manager.

"Oh?" Xiaolou, seated high above them, laughed. "What a coincidence for him to win his ninth victory today. I will bestow you with a flagon of Immortal nectar. Work hard for my Kindwater clan; my Kindwater clan will definitely not mistreat our soldiers."

"Thank you, exalted Immortal." The golden-haired giant knelt down on one knee, his voice rumbling. Although his words sounded rather muddy, they were the words of the human tongue; he was a creature comparable to a Wanxiang Adept, after all, and was quite intelligent and thus quick to learn a new tongue.

Soon afterwards, the golden-haired giant departed. In his place within the arena appeared a troop of seductive female dancers, who began to dance with fans while the sound of music rang out from the side.

"In the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, these creatures from other worlds are set to fight each other. When I first arrived at Stillwater City, in the gambling arena, I fought against those monstrous beasts, as well as with other humans. Those monstrous beasts and humans weren't able to refuse at all; they were forced to obey and go fight. The weak are given no choices. Only by becoming strong can one have the power to choose. First, grow strong enough to choose for yourself; only then can one master one's own destiny." This was what Ning was thinking to himself. Only by constantly reflecting on one's own heart and mind could one make one's Dao-heart continually grow stronger.

“The Conclave of Immortal Destiny is a chance for me to be reborn anew and change my life. I need to rely on the Conclave and make myself even more powerful through tempering through adversity.”

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All sorts of performances were going on in the center of the arena. Ji Ning and the others were clinking wine glasses together while watching. As for the antisocial Xiao Lang, who was rather unhappy to begin with, upon seeing how courteously Xiaolou and Songspear treated Ning, he was growing even more unhappy.

“Everyone.” Xiao Lang suddenly spoke out.

Instantly, Ning and the others all looked over. Xiao Lang rarely spoke; since he now spoke, everyone naturally turned to look at him.

“The battles of these creatures aren’t interesting enough. As I see it... why don’t I have a little spar with fellow Daoist Ji Ning?” Xiao Lang’s eyes had a hint of desire for battle in them, as well as complete confidence. “I hear that fellow Daoist Ji Ning’s power is formidable. He was even able to kill Youngflame Nong, and in particular was also able to kill that Primal-level Fiendgod under Youngflame Nong’s command. This makes my hands itch. Today, fellow Daoist Ji Ning and I will merely spar with each other; if one party is unable to keep fighting, then we can just simply admit defeat. We absolutely won’t harm the friendship between us. Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, what say you?”

Ning was startled. Why did the man suddenly want to spar with him?

Although it was Ning who killed the Hydraga Fiendgod, that creature was a Primal-level Fiendgod with the power of a supreme Loose Immortal; anyone with half a brain would understand that Ning must have used some sort of special method to kill it. Otherwise, just by relying on his own true power, how could he have done so?

Xiaolou, Songspear, and Fairy Wavecolor just watched, waiting to see Ning’s reaction.

“No need.” Ning shook his head.

Xiao Lang, upon hearing this, became all the more convinced that Ning had no ability, which was why Ning had no confidence in fighting him. Ning was, after all, just thirty years old.

“It’s just a spar, not a life-and-death battle,” Xiao Lang said unhappily. “Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, your fame is widespread. You even killed a Primal-level Fiendgod; why don’t you dare spar against me?”

“It was luck that allowed me to kill that Primal-level Fiendgod, not my own true power,” Ning said.

Xiao Lang secretly snickered. Everyone knew that there was no way Ning could’ve done it through his own power! But today, so long as Ning could be convinced to spar, he was going to make Ning look like a fool.

“We are all going to participate in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. By then, life-and-death battles will come in a steady stream. Today is just sparring; if you don’t even dare to spar, how can you participate in the Conclave?” Xiao Lang intentionally put on an angry, unsatisfied appearance. “Are you actually afraid, fellow Daoist Ji Ning?”

Ning frowned. Why was this Xiao Lang trying to force him into this?

“I don’t want to spar.” Ning shook his head. “If fellow Daoist Xiao Lang truly wishes to fight me, once the Conclave of Immortal Destiny begins, we can fight then.”

“Conclave of Immortal Destiny? That’s more than a year from now! And those battles are all life-and-death battles. If you don’t even dare spar, how...” Xiao Lang laughed coldly, a look of disdain already on his face.

“Enough.” Kindwater Xiaolou frowned and spoke out.

Xiao Lang nodded. “I won’t force fellow Daoist Ji Ning. Since fellow Daoist Ji Ning won’t spar, then forget it. Fellow Daoist Wavecolor, how about we two spar for fun?”

Fairy Wavecolor frowned slightly, but then she laughed and said, “Then I’ll ask you, Xiao Lang, to show mercy in our fight.”

“Don’t worry, I won’t hurt you,” Xiao Lang said. “I’ll stop after knocking

your magic treasures away.”

This caused anger to appear in Fairy Wavecolor’s heart. It was just as the stories said; this Xiao Lang truly did have a bizarre disposition. He was so arrogant in his speech.

“Then let’s do it.” Fairy Wavecolor immediately flew towards the center of the arena.

“Alright.” Xiao Lang’s body blurred, then he appeared within the arena as well. As for the dancing women that had been in the arena, they all quickly fled and left.

Ning sat there, looking at the arena and at Xiao Lang and Fairy Wavecolor. He frowned to himself. “This Xiao Lang really thinks he is invincible. I’ve just arrived at the imperial capital; the Youngflame clan is definitely scheming to act against me, so I need to be vigilant for a period of time. This Xiao Lang might be secretly working for the Youngflame clan, and might throw out some terrifyingly powerful magic treasures at me, such as that ‘Lock’ scroll, at which point I might suffer a tremendous loss. Although I have a Primaltwin, my true body is still more important.”

In the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, the usage of Dao-seals and certain other magic treasures was forbidden. One had to rely on one’s own true power; only in such a way could geniuses be chosen.

But in a spar in the Cloudwater Manor, if Xiao Lang truly had been sent by the Youngflame clan, if he were to suddenly produce a terrifying, bizarre treasure and destroy Ning’s true body...that’d be a completely unfair death.

“This Kindwater Xiaolou was actually able to bring even a person of such a disposition into his estate...” Ning gave a glance to the nearby Xiaolou. Xiaolou continued to smile as he watched the arena.

Xiaolou knew exactly what sort of a weird, twisted personality Xiao Lang had. But even if Xiao Lang was a rabid dog, so long as he obeyed orders, he would still be very useful.

Sometimes, there were things that he couldn’t do that a rabid dog could.

Chapter 27: Assassination

Within the central arena. The grand sealing formation now covered this region, and a violet-robed Xiao Lang and a red-robed Fairy Wavecolor were staring at each other from afar.

“Hahaha, Fairy Wavecolor, if you aren’t able to withstand my attacks, then hurry up and admit defeat.” Xiao Lang laughed in a ratherly sickly fashion. And then, following his laughter, his skin turned completely red, as though a river of lava was flowing beneath his skin. His eyes also turned the color of fire as well.

He lifted his hands slightly.

Whoosh. Instantly, petals of fire began to emerge around him, each of them blazing with the stench of blood. At the same time, the arena seemed to instantly become transformed into a world of fire. Although the flames just hovered there in the air, it caused the insides of the grand sealing formation to become extremely hot, and even the air in the arena began to shimmer in a twisted manner.

“Hmph.” Fairy Wavecolor let out a cold snort. Whoosh. A jade-green ribbon suddenly howled through the air. This jade-green ribbon swirled out in circles, instantly and completely guarding an area of tens of meters around Fairy Wavecolor’s body. At the same time, it caused a seemingly limitless amount of watery mist to emerge, and the region around her seemed to become a world of water.

Around Xiao Lang, the temperature was extremely high. Around Fairy Wavecolor, however, was a world of watery fog and mist. The fire and the water began to clash against each other, and crackling sounds could be heard.

“Your alluring charms are useless against me.” Xiao Lang emitted a shrill screech, and his fiery, lava-like eyes became even more savage. “Have a taste of my bloodflame earthfire!”

As he let out the screech, Xiao Lang suddenly opened his mouth. Whoosh! Instantly, flames that reeked of blood billowed out, instantly

filling the region. The petals of fire that were hovering in the area around him, under the guidance of the earthfire, actually formed into an enormous formation, transforming into a an enormous midair millstone formed from bloodflame earthfire that slowly swiveled, grinding downwards.

Swish...the jade-green ribbon continued to swim about in circles, and the runes on it began to glow, with undulating ripples rising up then snapping back down like bubbles. The ribbon was incomparably flexible and resilient, and it was able to forcibly resist the bloodflame earthfire.

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Outside the formation, Ji Ning and the others focused their attentions as they watched. Kindwater Xiaolou said, "Xiao Lang's 'bloodflame earthfire' has already reached the first grade. When forged into this 'Bloodfire Millstone' technique, it is quite formidable. Ordinary Primal Daoists aren't able to withstand the crushing pressure of the Bloodfire Millstone."

The nearby Skyfarmer Songspear laughed, "Fairy Wavecolor perfectly counters him; her 'Skywater Net Formation' is perfect and legendary for defense. To break through it is actually an incredibly hard feat."

"Fairy Wavecolor has fairly few techniques." Xiaolou shook his head. "She generally uses her Skywater Net Formation to protect herself, then relies on her divine will and her charming abilities...and she has indeed reached a formidable level in them. But Xiao Lang is a madman; it's simply too hard to mesmerize him."

"Aside from her charming techniques, Fairy Wavecolor is skilled in other divine will techniques as well. So long as Xiao Lang succumbs to one of them, she will immediately be able to switch from defending to attacking!" Songspear said.

Ning, curious, just listened. The report from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain only had cursory explanations; how could they be as well-informed as Songspear and Xiaolou regarding their own friends?

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“You crazy bitch...argh!!!!” Xiao Lang pressed a hand against his head, howling savagely. As for Fairy Wavecolor, she just laughed coldly. Those ribbons that had been circling around her suddenly expanded dramatically, and at the same time, one drop after another of incomparably dense and heavy water, each one having the weight of a mountain, came smashing towards Xiao Lang!

“Graaaaaaaah!” Xiao Long howled shrilly, and then he suddenly grew out four more arms, and two more heads emerged from his shoulders as well.

[Three Heads, Six Arms!]

Each of Xiao Lang’s six arms clenched a long black awl in them, and with the shrill howl, the long black awls transformed into a rainbow streak of light as it struck straight towards Fairy Wavecolor, carrying the limitless force of the bloodflame earthfire with it. Every single one of those six long black shuttles were capable of causing the colors of the world to change, and gave off the strange feeling of being able to puncture a hole through reality.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Xiao Lang, with three heads and six arms, attacked wildly as the surrounding area once more manifested the millstone of bloodflame earthfire, which crushed down towards her.

“F*ck off.” Fairy Wavecolor struggled to execute her divine will technique once more. She was skilled in three mighty divine will techniques; one was a charm, one was for ambushing, and one was for forceful assault. She had trained all three to an extremely high level, and by relying on her powerful soul as a reincarnated Immortal, she was extremely powerful when using them. She had, indeed, gained quite a bit of fame.

But if, however, an opponent was able to resist her secret arts, then her chances for victory would be much lower.

BOOM. With the support of the millstone of bloodflame earthfire, the three-headed, six-armed Xiao Lang attacked with incomparable savagery, forcibly breaking through one layer of the defense of the jade-green

ribbon.

“I admit defeat.” An unhappy voice rang out.

“Bahahaha...”

Only now did Xiao Lang stay his hand, dismissing his bloodflame earthfire and his divine ability. He laughed wildly, and his body continued to emit a scorching heat. “Fairy Wavecolor, I told you that you’d lose. That divine will technique of yours? Bahaha, you want to shake my soul? In your dreams.”

The grand sealing formation disappeared. Fairy Wavecolor, with a cold face, flew back to her own position, not even bothering to look at Xiao Lang.

“Ji Ning, wanna spar?” Xiao Lang gave Ning a glance, appearing quite smug.

“No need,” Ning said calmly.

“Hmph.” Xiao Lang flew straight back to his own seat, clearly quite delighted with himself. Generally speaking, madmen with twisted personalities actually had extremely tough Dao-hearts. Xiao Lang was one such twisted madman. He was the sort who would never bow his head, even in the face of death; he’d remain as arrogant and unbridled as ever. Although he had offended quite a few people, he remained true to his own personality.

Still...he also knew who he couldn’t afford to offend. For example, he never tried to set himself up against Kindwater Xiaolou.

Cloudwater Manor. In the air above the long passageway that led to the place where Ji Ning currently was, a bald old man suddenly appeared. It was Immortal Floatcloud, who had changed his appearance.

“Ji Ning!” Immortal Floatcloud walked through the midair corridor, no thoughts in his mind save one – to kill Ji Ning!

When he saw Ji Ning lead a group of Golden Imperials to Cloudwater Manor, Immortal Floatcloud understood that he would have no other

opportunities. In King Yan's Estate, there was no way to kill Ji Ning at all. When leading a group of Golden Imperials on his flying ship, Immortal Floatcloud still didn't have even the slightest hint of a chance.

But right now, Ning was chatting and merrymaking with others, and his servants and guards were all stationed somewhere else. This...this actually gave Immortal Floatcloud his one and only chance.

Although the Cloudwater Manor definitely had experts guarding it, as well as layers of protective formations and spells, as far as Immortal Floatcloud was concerned, this was going to be the best chance he had. If he continued to hesitate, then by the time Ning returned to King Yan's Estate and rested for a day without leaving, he, Immortal Floatcloud, would have his soul devoured and shattered due to his oath to the Dao of the Heavens.

"This is my final chance."

"Ji Ning. Either you die, or I die." Immortal Floatcloud walked on the levitating pathway, moving straight towards main door towards that three thousand meter tall building.

There were two Wanxiang Adepts standing guard at the door; they were here to prevent others from disturbing the people inside.

"Eh?" One of the guards immediately spoke out. "What are you doing here?"

The noise-cancellation features of the Cloudwater Manor's buildings were simply too good; there was no way for the people inside to hear the noises coming from outside. Ning and the others continued to eat, drink, chat, and laugh. They weren't on guard at all.

"I came to meet young master Kindwater," Immortal Floatcloud said. As his words rang out, the two Wanxiang guards suddenly felt their souls grow dazed.

And in that instant that their souls were stunned!

Immortal Floatcloud, with a single step, appeared before the door, then pushed it open and charged in.

Bang! The door immediately swung open.

“Haha, Fairy Wavecolor, I don’t want to criticize you, but your weakness is way too obvious. If your divine will technique is useless, then you are guaranteed to lose.” Xiao Lang, who had just won, was incomparably smug right now. “And Ji Ning. Hey, Ji Ning, you’ve only trained for thirty years; I recommend that you don’t go embarrass yourself in the Conclave of Immortal destiny. Train for another three centuries.”

“Enough.” Xiaolou spoke out.

And just as Xiaolou spoke out...the door suddenly opened.

“Eh?” Xiaolou, Songspear, Ning, and the others all turned their heads to look. Because the building in which they were having their banquet was three thousand meters high, the servants who brought in food and wine, as well as the dancers and musicians, would all come in through another corridor. And when they did, they would all be completely silent. Very few would just push the main door open.

Swoosh.

Immortal Floatcloud, after pushing the door open, took a single step and appeared directly in front of Ning. At the same time, a white bone needle suddenly appeared in his hand, and he sent it flying forward, straight towards Ning!

The surrounding world instantly froze! A powerful, deathly aura emanated outwards as the white bone needle, carrying an infinitely terrifying aura, pierced straight towards Ning.

“Whitebone Immortal Slayer Needle!” Xiaolou, Songspear, Ning, Fairy Wavecolor, and the smug Xiao Lang all had the looks on their faces completely changed.

In this instant...all of them felt cold fear. They all knew how terrifying the Whitebone Immortal Slayer Needles were...and they all watched as one of them flew straight towards Ji Ning!

“It must be a Deathsworn the Youngflame clan has sent over...and it is a Loose Immortal Deathsworn at that. Only an Earth Immortal or Loose

Immortal can activate this Whitebone Immortal Slayer Needle.” Xiaolou immediately shattered a Dao-seal, and a stream of jade water immediately began to glow as it flowed over his body. “With the emergence of this needle...even though Ji Ning is a Fiendgod Body Refiner, even his soul will probably be destroyed, to say nothing of his Fiendgod body.”

“He’s dead. He’s dead for certain. That’s a Whitebone Immortal Slayer Needle; it’s a killing technique against even many Loose Immortals. Many Loose Immortals would perish to it; only a few, extremely powerful Loose Immortals would be able to block it, but they would still be injured. Ji Ning is absolutely dead.” Xiao Lang was actually delighting in Ning’s misfortune; he, too, could guess that this was a Deathsworn from the Youngflame clan.

In this instant, Xiaolou, Songspear, Fairy Wavecolor, and Xiao Lang were all certain that Ning was most likely going to die.

As for the Golden Imperials which Ning had brought with him, they were shocked as well. “Protect the young master!” The problem was, it would take the fifty Golden Imperials a little bit of time to assemble into a Dao-soldier formation, then hurry over to save Ning. But...how fast was the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle flying? There was no time for them at all.

No one could save Ning. Everything relied on Ning himself!

“The Youngflame clan.” Ning instantly understood, and he immediately unleashed his divine ability.

Ning’s body instantly exploded forth with divine power, becoming incomparably tall and muscular. Lightning began to crackle on his body as he seemed to transform into an enormous vajra. At the same time, four more arms grew out from his body, and two more heads emerged from his shoulders.

[Three Heads, Six Arms]!

Ning’s six arms wielded the three Darknorth Swords and three Heaven-ranked flying swords. These three were all top-grade magic treasures left

behind by Immortal Juhua which he personally used for battle.

“Waterflame Lotus!” Thanks to the treasures which Youngflame Nong had left behind, Ning’s earthfire and dire-ice had both reached the second grade already.

An enormous Waterflame Lotus appeared, swiveling around this three-headed, six-armed Fiendgod.

“[Starseizing Hand]!”

Ning’s six arms exploded with awe-inspiring power!

“Grand Dao Domain!”

The three-headed, six-armed Ji Ning, wielding six enormous Immortal swords, crackled with electricity. His aura filled the heavens, and a Waterflame Lotus swiveled around him. At the same time, the entirety of the building became instantly transformed into a world of sword-ki. The limitless field of sword-ki instantly filled the entire building, and sword-ki was stabbing everywhere. The six enormous swords in Ning’s hands began to glow with an incomparably dazzling golden metallic light, a light that was so strong that it was all but in material form.

“Block.” The three-headed, six-armed Ning used all six swords to simultaneously block towards the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle!

Chapter 28: Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation

Although this was slow to describe, in reality it happened in an instant!

Faced with the lightning-fast Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle, Ji Ning didn't even have time to make his Primaltwin emerge to block. After all, although he could indeed make his Primaltwin emerge from the underwater estate extremely quickly, it would still need to unleash the hundreds of Heaven-ranked flying swords and execute the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. All these things took time! The Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle, however, gave Ning no such time at all.

Ning only had enough time to immediately activate his divine abilities, then block!

BOOM!

Although the Waterflame Lotus surrounding Ning was incomparably resilient, it was still instantly penetrated through!

The three-headed, six-armed Ji Ning held his Immortal swords in his hands, unleashing his most powerful attacks to block the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle.

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

Six consecutive and incomparably ferocious collisions. Of the six swords, three were Darknorth Swords and thus possessed tremendous power. As for the other three Heaven-ranked swords, although Ning's true body couldn't fill them with his elemental ki, as Heaven-ranked artifacts, they were still quite tough and strong.

If Ning had used Earth-ranked flying swords, the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needles probably would've pierced straight through them. These three Heaven-ranked flying swords Immortal Juhua had left behind wouldn't shatter, at least! They would at least allow Ning to unleash the full power of his [Starseizing Hand]!

Each collision was like an enormous mountain range smashing towards Ning. Six consecutive collisions! Fortunately, Ning's palms had been strengthened by the [Six Cycles of the Starseizer] to be even more powerful than Heaven-ranked magic treasures. That's the only reason why he was able to hold the hilts of the swords securely.

BOOM!

As the six sword-wielding ars all executed the [Starseizing Hand] and strove to block the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needles, Ning himself was knocked flying back by the terrifying collusive force. He shot out backwards like a meteor.

"Block, block, BLOCK!" Ning strove his utmost to block for as long as he could.

Although Ning had already trained to the eleventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] as a Fiendgod Body Refiner and was nominally only at the peak Wanxiang Adept level, because Ning had acquired the peacock plumes and trained to the second Cycle of the [Six Cycles of the Starseizer], his [Starseizing Hand] technique was now capable of exploding with incomparably terrifying force. This caused Ning's power to instantly surpass the Primal stage and charge all the way into the Void-level Earth Immortal stage!

With the additional support of his current Grand Dao Domain, his nearly perfect Dao of Rainwater, and the fact that Sword Immortals were extremely skilled in attacks....

BANG!!!! Ning's towering Fiendgod body struck heavily against a wooden pillar. This wooden pillar, however, was covered by the restrictive spells which stretched across the entire Cloudwater Manor. It was extremely stable, and it wasn't damaged in the slightest.

"Ugh." Ning spat out a mouthful of fresh blood. His physical body actually was already covered with all sorts of scars and wounds by now, and blood was oozing out from them. The collusive forces had been far, far too powerful. Although Ning had executed [Heavenly Transformations] and [Pentabolt Vajra] to stabilize and bolster his divine

body, his body was still vastly inferior to his two hands. The force of the collisions caused his flesh to split open into countless wounds.

“I didn’t die.” Ning was startled.

He had gone all out to block the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle, and as he had continued to block, the power of the needle had continuously been whittled away. In the end, as it smashed down against the final sword, it had caused the sword to slash across Ning’s chest. The force of that final collision had nearly caused Ning’s body to implode...but in the end, although countless tears and rips appeared on his body, he didn’t truly perish.

“I blocked it.” Ning mentally began to celebrate wildly. “Fortunately, I trained in the second Cycle of the [Six Cycles of the Starseizer]. And fortunately, during this past year, I’ve begun to train in the [Three Heads, Six Arms] ability. This allowed all six of my arms to execute the [Starseizing Hand]!”

Crimsonbright divine energy began to flow over the countless wounds covering his body, and the divine energy quickly began to cause the wounds to heal and close. Ning’s six arms continued to each grasp an Immortal sword. The sword-light unique to Sword Immortals filled the skies. Sword-ki filled the entire area with their awe-inspiring might.

“He didn’t die?”

As Ning was knocked flying backwards, Immortal Floatcloud had charged forward as well. Although he was amazed by the fact that Ning had managed to block it, he didn’t pause or hesitate at all! This was because he had sworn an oath to the Dao of the Heavens for this assassination. If Ning didn’t die, then his soul would be shattered. Thus, his reaction came quite quickly.

Whoosh! As he charged straight towards Ning, Immortal Floatcloud waved his arm. Instantly, a golden heart appeared in midair. The golden heart immediately began to manifest thousands of veins and arteries, forming an enormous net that completely covered the empty central region they were in. This enormous net formed from countless blood

vessels glowed with a bloody light, and an aura of power emanated from it.

For the sake of assassinating Ning, Immortal Floatcloud had prepared two magic items. The first was the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle. It possessed astonishing power, and Immortal Floatcloud believed that even he would be heavily injured upon being assaulted by it. Ji Ning? Ordinary protective items would be immediately shattered by it; Ji Ning would almost assuredly perish.

The other item was this, the 'Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation'. Once the formation was set down, it would take a good amount of time for either the Imperial Guard or the Loose Immortals on guard here to charge through it. As long as he had enough time, he would be able to kill Ji Ning in a one-on-one fight.

He was a supreme Loose Immortal! Ji Ning was merely a Wanxiang Adept! Even though the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle had been blocked by some strange magic treasures, in a true one-on-one fight, if he had enough time, he refused to believe Ji Ning could withstand him!

Both treasures were single-use items. Although he had paid a high price of many magic treasures, in truth, the Youngflame clan had essentially 'gifted' these two items to Immortal Floatcloud.

Cloudwater Manor was the largest, most important trading ground for the Kindwater clan in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia.

There were thirty six Loose Immortals permanently stationed here.

The Kindwater clan had thousands of Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals. For only thirty six to be stationed here...on the surface, the number seemed to be quite low. In truth, however, these thirty six Loose Immortals...were all dressed in Immortal-ranked Dao-soldier armors. Once they all joined forces, they could even force a Celestial Immortal to retreat!

"Earth character, second number. There's an assassination attempt there!"

Some of the thirty six Loose Immortals were in private training, while others were drinking and carousing. However, upon the Primal Daoist overseeing Cloudwater Manor sending them mental messages, they all instantly arrived in the air above Cloudwater Manor.

Thirty six of them in total! They were all dressed in black Dao-armors, and they each emanated with terrifying auras that filled the heavens. They hung there in midair for a moment, then suddenly all thirty six of them joined together to transform into an enormous black serpent. As soon as it appeared in the skies, a stream of water appeared. The surrounding space was completely frozen. The giant black serpent immediately charged towards the three-thousand meter tall building where Ning and the others were currently located.

Whoosh.

The enormous ceiling, under the control of the overseer of Cloudwater Manor, split open, allowing the giant black serpent to immediately charge in.

Although this took time to describe, in truth, the thirty six Loose Immortals were incredibly fast. And yet, despite their speed, by the time they arrived, the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation had already completely covered Ning's region.

"He's dead for sure." Xiao Lang stared at the area covered by the massive net of blood vessels. "This is the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation. It can only be acquired at a cost of half a million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, and it can only be used once. Although it can only be used once...it has truly astonishing power. Even if the Imperial Guard of the Grand Xia were to arrive, it would take them some time to break through it. Although Cloudwater Manor is guarded by experts of the Kindwater clan, I imagine it will take them time to break through as well.

Skyfarmer Songspear, Kindwater Xiaolou, and Fairy Wavecolor were all in a stunned state as well as they all sighed.

The reason why they were stunned...was because they all saw how just

now, Ning had instantly exploded with terrifying power. All of those divine abilities aside, Ning had demonstrated a Grand Dao Domain, and it had even had the resilience and elasticity of water. Ning's sword-light had flowed in a steady, unbreakable stream as his six Immortal swords had blocked the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle! Clearly, Ning was incredibly powerful in terms of the Dao.

"Just by virtue of the fact that he has comprehended a Grand Dao Domain, this Ji Ning has vastly surpassed all of those geniuses who have only mastered a single Dao-Path. Xiao Lang, Fairy Wavecolor...they are vastly inferior to Ji Ning." Xiaolou secretly sighed to himself. "And he was actually able to survive under the assault of the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle. Clearly, in that instant when he unleashed his full power, he reached the level of a Loose Immortal."

Those who dared to participate in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny were generally geniuses at the peak Wanxiang Adept level who were capable of exploding forth with the power of a peak Primal Daoist! Only a small number were able to reach the combat power of a Loose Immortal!

Only...

Immortals had tremendously varying levels of power as well. Void-level Earth Immortals, for example, were also divided into early, middle, late, and peak stages. Because of different levels of insight into the Dao, Immortals had tremendously different levels of power as well. Even those most supreme of Wanxiang Adept geniuses were only comparable to ordinary Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals.

But even amongst supreme geniuses, there were still differences; Ning, because of his [Starseizing Hand], could be considered an ordinary Void-level Earth Immortal, but with the powerful life-force of his Fiendgod body, and the added support of the [Three Heads, Six Arms] ability giving him six arms that could use the [Starseizing Hand], Ning was able to stay alive against the assault of even a Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle.

"What a pity." Songspear secretly sighed to himself.

"What a genius. And he's only trained for thirty years?" Fairy Wavecolor

secretly sighed as well.

“He’s already so strong at thirty years of age. He is indeed much stronger than me. Buuut, he’s gonna die soon.” Xiao Lang stared fixedly at the grand formation.

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“Young master.”

The squad of Golden Imperials instantly transformed into a divine golden dragon, battering and smashing towards the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation.

Rumble...

The thousands of blood vessels covering the formation just bulged slightly, then easily deflected the force of the attack. The golden heart was pumping blood in an endless stream to them, causing the grand formation to remain standing. Only the blood was used up would the formation dissipate.

“Break!” The thirty six Loose Immortals in the form of a giant black serpent flew in from above. With power that was tens of times more powerful than the divine golden dragon, they launched an awe-inspiring strike against the formation.

The formation trembled, and many of the blood vessels actually splintered and shattered. The golden heart, however, frantically sent out more blood, causing many new blood vessels to be grown out, allowing the formation to be sustained.

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“No one can save you now.” Immortal Floatcloud was within the formation. In front of him, three flying swords had appeared, forming into a formation-diagram.

As for Ning, who had been smashed against the wooden pillar...he laughed coldly. “Youngflame clan, right?” Next to him, a black-robed youth suddenly appeared. This black-robed youth looked identical to him,

and as it appeared, more than two hundred flying swords appeared around him as well.

Ning's true body suddenly vanished from sight. He had entered the underwater estate. After all, during the previous exchange, Ning's true body had been heavily wounded and needed to recuperate. His divine power had been almost used up, with only 20% remaining; he didn't have enough to continue fighting against this Immortal.

Rumble...

With the nine precious Waterbreaker Godshark Swords serving as the core, the other 200+ Heaven-ranked flying swords were all activated, causing the insides of the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation to be filled with an endless amount of sword-ki. This sword-ki...was tens of times more powerful than the sword-ki Ning's true body had shown earlier.

"Primaltwin?" Immortal Floatcloud's eyes instantly turned huge. He stared at the three Heaven-ranked flying swords in front of him, then at the 200+ Heaven-ranked flying swords hovering in front of the distant, black-robed Ji Ning.

"WHAT?!" Outside the formation. Songspear, Xiaolou, and Fairy Wavecolor, who had been feeling pity for Ji Ning, were all flabbergasted.

"But, but...IMPOSSIBLE!" Xiao Lang, who had been smirking coldly as he watched Ning 'go to his death', actually called out in shock.

Chapter 29: Primaltwin Vs Loose Immortal

The black-robed Ji Ning stood there, more than two hundred Heaven-ranked flying swords floating around him. The amount of sword-ki filling the region inside the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation was simply astonishing and heart-shaking. Anyone could tell what terrifying power this black-robed Ning possessed. And, given that Ning's true body had suddenly vanished, everyone present could guess...

That this black-robed Ning was a Primaltwin!

"That's a Primaltwin. How...but...Ji Ning's only trained for thirty years..." A look of shock and anger was in Xiao Lang's eyes, along with disbelief. "He's only trained for thirty years! How can he have a Primaltwin? He dared to split his soul in half? Isn't he afraid of death?"

"What a formidable Primaltwin. All of those two hundred-plus flying swords seem to be Heaven-ranked. I heard that this Ji Ning purchased hundreds of high-grade Heaven-ranked flying swords from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain; so it was for the sake of giving them to his Primaltwin for use. This Ji Ning is exceptionally wealthy; his Primaltwin has probably trained all the way up to the peak Primal level at one go." Kindwater Xiaolou secretly sighed in amazement. "To be able to simultaneously control more than two hundred Heaven-ranked magic treasures...he absolutely has a peak Loose Immortal's power. His true body has vanished; it should've entered an estate that he carries with him. Mobile estates are exceptionally valuable. How much money does this Ji Ning have? Can it be that he gained an enormous sum from the Witchriver Immortal Estate?"

Not even Youngflame Nong had an estate that he could carry around with him...but Ji Ning did!

Xiaolou believed that Ning must have acquired it from the Witchriver Immortal Estate. He had no idea that this Immortal estate which Ning was carrying with him had been gifted to Ning by the giant yellow bear, the spirit of the underwater estate, for free.

“Formidable.” Skyfarmer Songspear stared at the formation.

“Such power...and yet, when Xiao Lang challenged him in such an insulting manner, he didn’t pay him any heed. He truly has tremendous restraint.” Fairy Wavecolor sighed in amazement as well.

They could all guess that Ning’s true body was now hidden within the estate he carried with him. Mobile estates could indeed hold people...but no matter what, either Ning’s true body or his Primaltwin had to be in the outside, real world. If both hid inside, then the mobile estate would be forced to reveal itself.

Generally speaking, mobile estates weren’t too strong in terms of resisting attacks. Enemies could forcibly take it over, then toss it into the voids of the Three Realms, at which point the person inside would be doomed.

The Witchriver Immortal Estate, for example, was immobile and couldn’t be carried away. That was why it was able to be used as a headquarters and why it had such strong defenses. Estates that one could carry, however, were generally very weak.

One had to choose between strong defenses and mobility. Generally speaking, one could only choose a single quality from the two. Except, of course, for the likes of the ‘underwater estate’. Daoist Threelives, one of the primordial Fiengods who had been born before the universe had been established, had used all of his effort to craft it for his heirs. Only at the Primal level could it be carried, and it was exceedingly strong in defense. However, the value of such a treasure far surpassed even Pure Yang magic treasures; this was why it was so special.

Normal estates, however, had to obey the normal rules. Mobility or defensive strength; the two couldn’t co-exist.

“If my true body and Primaltwin both hide within the underwater estate, then under the wild attacks of this Loose Immortal of the Youngflame clan, the secrets of my underwater estate will probably be revealed.” Ning absolutely would not permit this to happen. “What’s more, my Primaltwin has already reached the peak Primal level. Although in terms of a base of

power, he's on a much lower level...that's not insurmountable."

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"It's actually a Primaltwin. Patriarch Arcanum, you screwed me over!" Immortal Floatcloud was howling with grief in his mind...and then, a look of savagery filled his eyes. "I have no way out. Either Ji Ning dies or I die."

"I refuse to believe that I, who have trained bitterly for more than a hundred thousand years, can't do anything to this little fellow who trained for thirty."

These thoughts flashed through his mind lightning-fast. After Immortal Floatcloud had laid down his Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation and saw Ning's Primaltwin, he spent just a brief moment in shock before executing his most powerful attack.

"HEAVEN!"

"EARTH!"

"MORTAL!"

Immortal Floatcloud bellowed, his entire face instantly turning completely red. Ignoring all consequences, he immediately used a forbidden technique. Within the core of his body, a golden lotus Primal exploded forth with even more elemental ki. The auras of those three flying swords in front of him which vaguely formed into a sword-diagram formation suddenly increased dramatically, and the formation-diagram seemed to truly materialize. The enormous formation-diagram seemed capable of swallowing the universe. It was incomparably vast, and clouds and fog appeared within the formation.

"KILL!!!" Immortal Floatcloud immediately used his most powerful killing technique.

He had no time to waste. The thirty six Loose Immortals of the Kindwater clan who were outside were joining forces to wildly assault his Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation. Once the formation was broken through, then in the face of those thirty six Loose Immortals who were dressed in Immortal-ranked Dao-armors, he probably would be finished

in a single exchange. Naturally, he had to seize the moment.

Rumble...

Heaven, Earth, Mortal. The three top-grade flying swords, surrounded by the spinning formation-diagram, seemed to carry the majesty of the world itself as it came crashing downwards towards Ning. This was using raw force to suppress the foe!

“Hmph.” The distant black-robed Ning, faced with this attack, didn’t move slower than Immortal Floatcloud at all. He also immediately executed the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. Under the guidance of those nine Waterbreaker Godshark Swords, the power of the two hundred-plus Heaven-ranked flying swords was joined together by the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], forming in front of Ning a flying sword that was surrounded by an aura of golden light.

“In terms of elemental ki, I’m a major level below him.”

“But in terms of the Dao...I’ve comprehended the Grand Dao Domain of the Dao of the Sword, and I’ve mastered the Dao-Path of Rainwater. The two have been fused into one, and Sword Immortals specialize in attacks.”

“In terms of treasures and formations, I have the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]; that Heaven-Earth-Mortal formation clearly isn’t all that exquisite. This technique of mine belonged to the Thousand Swords Immortal, a major foe of Immortal Juhua who Immortal Juhua had never been able to forget. Even the spirit of the underwater estate praised this technique. And, for the Youngflame clan to send you as a Deathsworn means that your status amongst the Loose Immortals of the Youngflame clan probably wasn’t that high either. You are vastly inferior to the Thousand Swords Immortal and Immortal Juhua.”

“In terms of flying swords...the Wavebreaker Godshark Swords come from the underwater estate, and are vastly superior to your three flying swords. In addition, I have nine of them. In terms of raw numbers, I have more than two hundred flying swords.”

“I refuse to believe I can’t win!” A cold light flashed through the eyes of the black-robed Ning, and his savage aura filled the skies.

One was dressed in black robes, the other in white. They stared at each other from afar.

BOOM! BOOM!

The three flying swords, carrying the enormous formation-diagram with them, came crashing downwards. As for that flying sword wreathed in golden light in front of Ning, it instantly pierced through the skies, carrying a sharp sheen that caused one's heart to tremble. It clashed directly against the enormous formation-diagram ahead of it.

Rumble....

An enormous rumbling sound of a collision. Elemental ki exploded, causing space to distort.

The three flying swords were actually forced backwards by several meters, and many cracks had appeared atop the foggy formation-diagram. As for Ning's flying sword, it dispersed into nothingness.

"Again." The black-robed Ning laughed coldly, and the two hundred-plus flying swords around him undulated once more. A large amount of sword-ki coalesced in front of his chest, forming yet another flying sword that was covered with a golden glow.

"How can this be? He blocked...blocked it!?" Immortal Floatcloud felt his heart grow cold. It was as though he was beneath the moon in a freezing winter night, and someone had just poured a bucket of ice water over his head. Even his soul felt cold. He had a feeling...that he was going to lose. He had executed a forbidden technique to unleash his most powerful killing attack, but his attack had actually been met head-on and blocked.

A head-on collision was the most effective way to judge the opponent's strength.

"His Primaltwin has the power of a supreme Loose Immortal in combat." Immortal Floatcloud now understood. "This...this is a true genius. His Primaltwin is probably only at the peak Primal level, and he has only trained for thirty years...but he's comprehended a Grand Dao

Domain. His insights are not inferior to mine, and the power of that grand flying sword formation is simply marvelous and unfathomable. His power is no lower than mine either.”

“Can it be that I, Floatcloud, am going to die here?” Immortal Floatcloud felt despair for just a brief moment; he wouldn’t so easily discard more than a hundred thousand years of cultivation.

“I failed to crush him with raw force...then I’ll try techniques, speed, and other secret arts.” Immortal Floatcloud had gone completely mad. He was using all of his power to struggle to kill Ning!

Whoosh!

The entire region within the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation became filled with white fog. The fog was incomparably thick, so thick that not even divine sense could penetrate it. This was Immortal Floatcloud’s most powerful supportive art, the ‘Heaven-Covering Fog’. However, executing this secret art consumed an enormous amount of his mental energy, and he was no longer able to keep his flying swords at peak power.

“I can’t see anything.” Xiao Lang, who had been staring so hard and fixedly that his eyes had gone bloodshot, instantly grew frantic. “Why is there so much fog there? I can’t see anything.”

“Fog? This fog is definitely capable of blocking out divine sense; otherwise, that Deathsworn wouldn’t use it..” Kindwater Xiaolou was pondering. “Of the many Loose Immortals of the Youngflame clan, there should be a few dozen that are close to the point of being unable to resist the Three Calamities or Nine Tribulations. Those amongst them that are capable of unleashing this sort of mist...it seems the only one is Loose Immortal Floatcloud?”

Celestial Immortal Patriarchs were truly ageless; they would only ever die in combat. Thus, they generally would live extremely long lives and experience countless things. It was thus quite hard for anyone to know for certain how many of the Celestial Immortals of a particular clan remained alive.

Loose Immortals, however, were different.

It was incredible for a Loose Immortal to live even a few million years, such as Immortal Juhua. This was why the Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals of every tribe could generally be located and verified. The Kindwater clan, at least, was quite familiar regarding the statuses of the vast majority of Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals of their mortal enemy, the Youngflame clan.

“This Ji Ning is so formidable. His Primaltwin definitely has the power of a supreme Loose Immortal...and he’s also a Sword Immortal. In a head-on clash, he was no weaker than that Loose Immortal Deathsworn.” Songspear mused to himself, “But with this bewildering fog unleashed, Ji Ning can’t see anything at all...he’s now in a bit of danger.”

....

“Strike.”

The thirty six Loose Immortals, in the shape of that giant black serpent, were absolutely as powerful as a Celestial Immortal. They once more charged towards the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation. They had smashed against it eight times now, and they had shattered countless blood vessels of the formation. However, that golden heart continued to frantically spew out even more blood, forming more arteries and veins as it strove to support and maintain this formation. Still, one could tell that scars were beginning to appear on the surface of the golden heart. Clearly, the attack of the thirty six Loose Immortals was simply too strong.

Within the grand formation. Fog was everywhere.

“Grand Dao Domain!”

“Waterflame Lotus!”

“My Own World!”

The black-robed Ning stood there. Faced with this divine sense smothering technique, he finally unleashed the protective technique which he had developed during this past year within the underwater estate. It must be understood that Ki Refiners had very weak bodies; thus,

they usually researched protective techniques that would prevent the opponent from easily reaching their flesh. Ji Ning naturally had to consider the best way to protect his Primaltwin.

Under the guidance of the spirit of the underwater estate, Ning had used his Grand Dao Domain, his Waterflame Lotus, and the 'My Own World' technique 1 to serve as the foundation for the development of a powerful protective technique.

The 'Lotusflower Swordland!'

*

1. This was the technique of merging the Grand Dao Domain and the Dao-Path of Rainwater, which I realized I accidentally missed in B11C3.

Chapter 30: A Loose Immortal Dies

Rumble...

The thirty six Loose Immortals of the Kindwater clan, in the form of the giant black serpent, launched a twelfth attack against the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation. It was already beginning to shudder, and the color of the golden heart was beginning to change. Beginning to grow dim, as the cracks and scars on its surface multiplied.

“Break, break, break!”

Immortal Floatcloud was in a berserk state, his white hair flying about. His three flying swords clashed hard against Ning’s Lotusflower Swordland.

Crackle...

Layers of lotus petals continuously defended, one layer after the other.

The [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]-formed golden flying sword was as fast as lightning. By comparison, the speed of the flying swords of Immortal Floatcloud was much lower; they were once more struck, then sent back.

“It’s over.”

Immortal Floatcloud suddenly gave up. His three flying swords no longer attacked. He just stood there, staring blankly at the black-robed Ji Ning, who stood there within the Lotusflower Swordland.

In the face of the Lotusflower Swordland...Immortal Floatcloud felt as though he was facing a turtle that had retreated into its shell. There was no way to break it at all! Or, at least, he wasn’t going to be able to do it in a short period of time. In addition, he could sense that his Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation was at the breaking point. He felt despair. He gave up. He understood that this time...he had failed.

Immortal Floatcloud looked at Ning, his face incomparably calm and peaceful. He sent mentally, “Ji Ning, tell me, what...what technique is this?”

The black-robed Ning, seeing that the opponent had actually stopped attacking, realized that the opponent had given up. Towards the bald elder in front of him, Ning actually didn't feel any hatred; instead, he felt pity. This was because Ning could tell...that this person was a Deathsworn!

“This is my Lotusflower Swordland.”

“Every single lotus petal was formed from my elemental ki and the sword-light.”

“The region covered by my lotus flowers becomes my world.”

“This is a world with the Dao of the Sword, the Dao of Rainwater, the Dao of Space, and the Dao of the Inferno. This is the most powerful technique which I have developed.” The black-robed Ning spoke mentally to his foe. In this moment...Ning understood that the man had chosen death.

Immortal Floatcloud looked at Ning, envy in his eyes. “The Dao of the Sword? The Dao of Space? The Dao of Rainwater? The Dao of the Inferno? So many Daos...and two of them are Grand Daos. You've actually been able to join them together perfectly and create a technique of your own. At only thirty years of age, you are already so talented...I've never before met a genius like you in my life. I can't even imagine what your future shall be like. I...am whole-heartedly convinced that my defeat was deserved.”

Ning, however, knew exactly how much effort he had put into the creation of this technique.

He had often gone to the Stellar Hall to meditate on the Dao.

He had often gone to the Still Room to quietly ponder.

He had repeatedly, tirelessly tested time and time again.

The spirit of the underwater estate had guided him as well...and all of these things had helped to inspire him, allowing him to develop this protective technique, this technique that was completely focused on defense.

“Kill me. Let me die by your hands.” A dreamy look was in Immortal Floatcloud’s eyes. In the moment before his death, his subconscious was telling him...that this peerless genius in front of him, Ji Ning, would have an astonishing future. In fact, he even had the vague feeling that an incomparably massive storm was about to arise...and that the peerless genius before him would become one of the most dazzling figures to emerge from the storm.

“As you desire.” The black-robed Ning nodded.

Swish!

A golden sword-light flew out.

Immortal Floatcloud didn’t block at all. He allowed it to slash directly through his body, piercing into the golden-lotus Primal within his body. The golden lotus, upon being pierced through, began to collapse.

Although Ning hadn’t destroyed Immortal Floatcloud’s soul, because of the oath he had sworn to the Dao of the Heavens, Immortal Floatcloud knew that his soul was about to be shattered regardless. He knew this...because he could sense the ripples from the impending descent of the Dao of the Heavens.

“Patriarch Arcanum...”

“In this moment, my subconscious is telling me that an enormous tempest is about to descend...one dazzling, eye-catching figure after another is going to arise from the storm, and this Ji Ning is going to be one of them. Our Youngflame clan is going to have a calamity befall us because of this...”

“Patriarch Arcanum, it is one thing for you to have doomed me...but how terrifying of an enemy have you made for our Youngflame clan?”

“In the future, you will regret it.”

“You will regret it.”

“You are the criminal, the sinner of our Youngflame clan. The sinner! But none of this has anything to do with me any longer...I, whose soul is

about to shatter, no longer have any connection to anything, to anything at all...”

Immortal Floatcloud closed his eyes. His body completely dissipated into nothingness, revealing an already battered and disintegrating golden-lotus Primal. Under the descent of the ripples of the Dao of the Heavens, the golden lotus was completely annihilated, quickly and completely vaporizing.

The more powerful a cultivator was, the more faith they would place in what their subconscious told them.

Immortal Floatcloud, in the moment before his death, could also sense that in the future, a terrifying storm was about to arise...and that even the likes of the Youngflame clan, which had existed from the earliest days of the Fiendgod Era until now, would be shaken and perhaps be thrown down by the storm...

BOOM!

As the sword-light of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] pierced through the golden-lotus Primal and as Immortal Floatcloud transformed into nothingness, a massive explosion could suddenly be heard. The Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation blew apart, and a giant black serpent coiled in the air above it, staring down at Ji Ning, who was being protected by a titanic, swiveling lotus flower.

One lotus petal swept around and picked up the flying swords, storage treasures, and other relics left behind by the deceased Immortal Floatcloud. This petal then drifted over to the black-robed Ji Ning.

The black-robed Ning waved his hand, collecting it all.

The entire manor was completely silent.

The terrified servants...the stunned Golden Imperials...Skyfarmer Songspear...Kindwater Xiaolou...Fairy Wavecolor...Xiao Lang...and even the thirty six Loose Immortals, who had dropped their formation...all of them stared at the black-robed Ning, protected by the defensive layers of the enormous Lotusflower Swordland.

They had just witnessed...

A Wanxiang Adept's Primaltwin execute a mighty Loose Immortal.

Chapter 31: Fame From the Battle

Kindwater Xiaolou, Skyfarmer Songspear, and the others were unable to even breathe. They were all in a state of shock.

“Xiaolou, whose this friend of yours?” The leader of the thirty six Loose Immortals, a burly and muscular bearded man, spoke out.

“Uncle Fan, he is Ji Ning. I invited him here...but who would’ve thought that he’d suffer an attack from a Loose Immortal Deathsworn?” Xiaolou said.

“Ji Ning?” The bearded, burly ‘Uncle Fan’ immediately realized who Ning was, as did the group of Loose Immortals behind him. The death of Youngflame Nong wasn’t something everyone knew, but most of these Loose Immortals who were permanently stationed at Cloudwater Manor knew about this matter. They thus immediately guessed that it had been the Youngflame clan who had sent out the Loose Immortal Deathsworn. Instantly, these Immortals of the Kindwater clan began to feel a sense of delighted schadenfreude; the Kindwater clan had been mortal enemies with the Youngflame clan for countless eons now.

“My young friend Ji Ning.” Kindwater Sanfan looked at the black-robed Ning, then said with a loud laugh, “You truly are formidable. If my guess is correct, this Loose Immortal should have been Immortal Floatcloud. He’s a Loose Immortal who has lived for a hundred thousand years, but he actually died in your hands...and your Primaltwin should be at the peak Primal level, correct?”

“For a peak Primal to be able to kill a supreme Loose Immortal...you clearly are a level lower in terms of elemental ki, and you’ve only trained for thirty years, but...formidable, formidable.”

“That lotus technique truly broadened my horizons as well, and that sword formation technique was also quite impressive.”

The group of Loose Immortals of the Kindwater clan all laughed and praised Ning.

The reason why they praised him was not just because Ning truly had surprised them; more importantly, there was a huge grudge between Ning and the Youngflame clan! Since the Kindwater clan was mortal enemies against the Youngflame clan, they took a true liking towards Ning. The more impressive he was, the more of a threat he would be to the Youngflame clan, and the more they would like him.

“You praise me too much.” The black-robed Ning shook his head. “The only reason I won was because your combined powers, seniors, was far too strong. You caused the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation to nearly break down. Immortal Floatcloud knew that he had no more time left, and so he voluntarily gave up. Only thus could I kill him.”

In terms of power, Ning’s Primaltwin was actually only on par with Immortal Floatcloud. If they had been in a simple one-on-one fight, it would be hard to say who would be the winner.

But this was no simple battle; it was an assassination attempt! An assassination attempt in the Cloudwater Manor of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia! It had to be resolved quickly. As a Deathsworn, Immortal Floatcloud had already been forced to the brink from the very beginning. If he wasn’t able to kill Ning in a short moment, then he would have no choice but to welcome death in his despair.

Swoosh. Swoosh. The Whitewater Hound and Little Qing charged over to the black-robed Ning. Previously, the two had been seated alongside the Golden Imperials, drinking and eating with them. When Ning suffered the attack, not even the Golden Imperials had been able to protect him in time, much less the two of them.

The two had been frantic and nervous, and had been driven nearly to the point of insanity. They didn’t even dare to send soul messages, for fear that Ning would be distracted by them; after all, this was a life-and-death battle. If Ning was distracted and something untoward happened as a result, then it truly would be too late for regrets.

Fortunately! Fortunately, Ning had survived.

“You killed him, that’s all that matters.” Kindwater Sanfan shook his

head, then laughed, “Your Primaltwin is at the peak Primal level; it is a full tier lower than Immortal Floatcloud in power. But in the end, Immortal Floatcloud wasn’t able to do anything to you. There’s nothing he can say about his loss, and your victory was a clean and fair one.”

Right at this moment, a powerful aura suddenly spread out from the air above them. This caused all the people present, including the Loose Immortals, Ning, Xiaolou, Songspear, and the others to all raise their heads to look. From the opened ceiling above them, a group of figures flew downwards, with the leader dressed in black armor and the rest dressed in silver armor. These were the Imperial Guards of the Grand Xia!

The leader, a black-armored youth, chortled, appearing to be quite relaxed and at ease. The silver-armored warriors behind him also seemed quite relaxed.

“Xiaolou, what’s going on in your Cloudwater Manor?” The black-armored youth laughed. “Just now, when the watchers of the Imperial Guard headquarters were scanning the entire imperial capital, they realized that thirty six Loose Immortals had appeared in the air above Cloudwater Manor, and that they had all formed into the Kindwater Godsnake and flew into this building. Something happen?”

The Imperial Guards watched over the entire imperial capital, including the streets, the arenas, and the many Immortal estates. Once powerful ripples of battle were felt, the Imperial Guard would immediately hurry over.

However, places like the Heavenly Treasures Mountain or Cloudwater Manor would often have some gambling duels and battles; these locations had all applied for permission for these events from the Grand Xia Dynasty. That was why they were permitted to hold battles, ‘with conditions’. The so-called ‘battles with conditions’ were almost all gambling battles and duels.

Assassinations, however, were still absolutely forbidden.

When the Imperial Guard had first noticed the powerful ripples coming from Cloudwater Manor, they had thought that it was a fairly powerful

betting duel going on. Only after seeing the thirty six Loose Immortals form into the Kindwater Godsnake did they realize that something was wrong! Still, with so many experts protecting Cloudwater Manor, the Imperial Guard didn't panic; one of the deputy commanders just grabbed a few people and casually sauntered over.

"It was an assassination," Xiaolou laughed. "The Loose Immortal Deathsworn assassin should have been Immortal Floatcloud of the Youngflame clan. Brother Hong, although I say that it was Immortal Floatcloud, that's just a guess."

"Immortal Floatcloud of the Youngflame clan? Who was he assassinating?" The black-armored youth, Xiamang Hong, exclaimed in surprise.

Xiaolou pointed at Ning. "Look. Him right there."

Xiamang Hong looked towards Ning with curiosity. "Him?" Xiamang Hong said, "The Youngflame clan sent a Deathsworn to assassinate you, but you remain alive?"

Ning was speechless. This man was excessively impolitic in his words; he actually said to the assassination target, 'you remain alive'?! How was Ning even supposed to respond to that?

"Ji Ning, let me make the introductions," Xiaolou said. "This is Deputy Commander Xiamang Hong of the Imperial Guard, and a good friend of mine."

Ning instantly understood. Xiamang Hong? So he was of the imperial clan of the Grand Xia. Most likely, he was viewed with some degree of importance by the imperial clan; otherwise, Kindwater Xiaolou wouldn't be so courteous to him.

"Brother Hong, this Ji Ning is a good friend of mine; when Immortal Floatcloud tried to assassinate him, he used the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation to seal the region off from outsiders, causing the many Immortals of my Cloudwater Manor to be unable to save Ji Ning in time. Fortunately, Ji Ning had a Primaltwin, and his Primaltwin should have been at the Primal Daoist level...and yet, he was able to actually kill

Immortal Floatcloud. You tell me; is he amazing or not?" Xiaolou said.

"He's that amazing?" Xiamang Hong's eyes lit up. "Ji Ning? I know about you. You are the little Wanxiang Adept fellow who killed Youngflame Nong, right? I didn't expect that you'd actually have a Primaltwin. If my memory serves, you've only trained for thirty years...and in thirty short years, you produced a Primaltwin that was able to kill Immortal Floatcloud, who was a full tier higher in power? Impressive, impressive. I, Xiamang Hong, deeply admire people of ability. I imagine that after this assassination attempt, you are a bit unsettled; in a few days, I'll send someone to invite you over. I'll put on a feast, and we can chat a bit. You have to give me this face, right?"

"I naturally will accept Commander Xiamang's invitation," the black-robed Ning said.

"Brother Ji Ning, you truly did scare me silly this time," Xiaolou said, looking at Ning. "It was a series of frightening events; even I thought that you would find it hard to overcome this tribulation."

"Brother Ji Ning's power is truly formidable. In this Conclave of Immortal Destiny, I am certain that brother Ji Ning will shine quite brightly," Skyfarmer Songspear nodded in praise as well. For Ning to be able to use his true body to survive the attack from the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle was enough for Skysong to feel certain that Ning's true body was incredibly powerful as well.

"I quite admire brother Ji Ning as well," Fairy Wavecolor said with a laugh while looking towards the nearby Xiao Lang. "But just now, someone was provoking brother Ji Ning repeatedly, insisting on sparring with him and looking down on him...and saying that if brother Ji Ning went to the Conclave, he would just lose face...and advising Ji Ning to go back home and train for three more centuries..."

"The person who said that is quite incredible as well."

Xiao Lang's face instantly began to alternate between purple and pale.

It was true that earlier, he had provoked Ning repeatedly, and had even spoken disdainfully about Ning afterwards. When he had defeated Fairy

Wavecolor, he had indeed felt quite smug, and in his arrogance had said quite a few unpleasant things. Now, looking back...it did all seem quite laughable.

“Look down on Ji Ning? Told him to not to go lose face in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, and to go home and train for three more centuries instead?” Xiamang Hong could tell what was going on, but he put on an act as he asked with ‘curiosity’, “Who in the world said that?”

“Who else could it be? None other than the distinguished, elegant, and suave young master, Adept Xiao Lang,” Fairy Wavecolor said, pointing at Xiao Lang.

Earlier, Xiao Lang had given her no face at all. Women...held grudges.

“Xiao Lang? It was you who looked down upon Ji Ning?” Xiamang Mang clearly was playing his role to perfection as he looked at Xiao Lang.

Xiao Lang gritted his teeth, his face pale. “Hmph.” He let out an angry snort, then turned and left, pushing open the main door and walking out from the corridor.

“He left?” Xiamang Hong shook his head. “Boooring.”

Kindwater Xiaolou was still looking at Ning. “Brother Ji Ning, you suffered an assassination attempt at my Cloudwater Manor, and we weren’t even able to help save you; the Cloudwater Manor was remiss...”

“The Cloudwater Manor is not to blame. This feud is one that I caused myself,” Ning said.

“Since our Kindwater clan has established Cloudwater Manor, we absolutely have to protect our guests who come here. There is nothing more to be said about this; it was our Kindwater clan who did not do what we were supposed to. Here is a treasure I recently acquired; I saw that you, brother Ji Ning, are exceptionally formidable in lotus techniques, and this treasure might help bring you some more insight.” Xiaolou suddenly produced a very slender bottle in his hand, topped by a lotus flower.

“This lotus bottle has been infused with some of the essence of the arcane secrets of the lotus within it; I’ll give it to you in recompense,”

Xiaolou said, handing it over to Ning. “Brother Ji Ning, no need to refuse; if you refuse, I truly won’t know what to do.”

Ning hesitated a moment, then accepted it.

Ning was able to tell at a single glance that this lotus bottle was extraordinary; the bottle itself wasn’t too impressive of a treasure, but the lotus flower on top of it was covered with many runes. It was indeed worth analyzing. It might indeed help inspire Ning to further perfect his Lotusflower Swordland.

After chatting for a few more moments, Ning made his farewells. He had just suffered an assassination attempt, after all; there was no way this banquet could continue.

Before Cloudwater Manor.

Kindwater Xiaolou and Skyfarmer Songspear watched as Ning flew out within that giant warship, which sent out waves of energy as it departed. They were silent for a moment.

“Xiamang Hong led a group of Imperial Guard over and learned about this event. I imagine that soon, the entire Imperial Guard will know about it...and as a result, the entire imperial capital will know about it.” Xiaolou sighed. “Word of this battle is going to quickly spread over the entire imperial capital. Ji Ning has now truly become famous.”

Previously, when Ning had purchased the peacock plumes, others thought that he had simply been lucky. But this time, however, Ning had proven his power in battle; only now would others truly esteem him.

“It is true. He’s only trained for thirty years, but has already produced a Primaltwin, and one which can kill a supreme Loose Immortal at that. A genius like him is quite rare, even in the imperial capital. The Youngflame clan has actually attracted an enemy like him...I imagine that in a few thousand years or a few tens of thousands of years, Ji Ning will be able to give the Youngflame clan quite a few good battles,” Songspear said with a laugh.

Chapter 32: A Silent Prayer

Nightfall. A cold wind was howling through the air. Within the Youngflame clan's estate.

The current clan leader of the Youngflame Clan, the Godplume Duke, was currently seated in his study. He had no desire to keep reading through the book he was holding. There was just a single thought in his mind; had the assassination of Ji Ning succeeded?

Tonight, Kindwater Xiaolou had invited Ji Ning to a banquet. Immortal Floatcloud was going to take the chance to assassinate Ji Ning. Naturally, the Godplume Duke knew of this plan. He was waiting for the results.

Crack!

The Godplume Duke suddenly turned to look at the life-tablet placed at the edges of his table. This was the life-tablet of Immortal Floatcloud, and at this moment, it had shattered.

"Floatcloud died. It seems the assassination attempt was made. However, I don't know if it was a success or not." The Godplume Duke took a deep breath. Regardless of whether it had succeeded or not, Floatcloud would perish. If he succeeded, then he would go reincarnate; if he failed, his soul would be shattered.

Time slowly passed...

The Godplume Duke continued to quietly wait for news to arrive.

A long time later.

"Clan leader." An azure-robed servant charged in, then immediately whispered, "We have word."

"Speak," the Godplume Duke said calmly.

"Immortal Floatcloud attempted to assassinate Ji Ning in Cloudwater Manor, and he even used the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation, engaging in a one-on-one fight with Ji Ning within it. But Ji Ning suddenly produced a Primaltwin and killed Immortal Floatcloud," the azure-robed servant

said.

The Godplume Duke had an ugly look on his face. He hesitated for a moment, then said with a frown, "You said Ji Ning's Primaltwin killed Immortal Floatcloud? But his true body is only at the Wanxiang level; can it be that his Primaltwin has already trained to the Void-level and become an Earth Immortal?"

"His Primaltwin should be at the Primal level," the azure-robed servant said. "There shouldn't be any mistake about this."

The Godplume Duke sat there quietly pondering, and the azure-robed servant didn't dare to make another sound.

After pondering for quite some time, the Godplume Duke said coldly, "Immortal Floatcloud was a Loose Immortal of my Youngflame clan; how dare he act in such an audacious way? Without receiving permission from my Youngflame clan, he actually dared to go attempt to assassinate Ji Ning on his own accord! This is a violation of the laws of the clan. Inform the outside world that Immortal Floatcloud violated the laws of the clan and has been expelled from the Youngflame clan, and is no longer a member of the clan. Also – blot out his name from the Youngflame clan registrar."

"Yes," the azure-robed servant said respectfully.

"Go now." The Godplume Duke waved his hand, and the azure-robed servant hurriedly retreated. As for the Godplume Duke himself, he sat there quietly for a long moment. This wasn't the news he had wanted; in fact, it was the worst news possible. Ji Ning had actually been able to rely on his own power to kill Immortal Floatcloud. Then killing Ji Ning...was truly going to be difficult.

"He's trained for thirty years, but is already so formidable; he needs to be killed. But in the imperial capital...killing him will be as hard as ascending to heaven. I imagine that we'll have to wait for him to leave the city before our Youngflame clan will be able to use all of the methods available to us to deal with him. But who knows how long we will have to wait before Ji Ning will leave?" The Godplume Duke quietly pondered this

issue. “I can only hope that his true body will be killed in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny by other supreme geniuses! His true body has far more potential than his Primaltwin does; so long as it dies, then his threat will be greatly lessened.”

Although the Primaltwin was currently more powerful than Ning’s true body, without question, the true body had more potential and a much more solid foundation.

“It’s time to pay a visit Patriarch Arcanum.” In truth, the Godplume Duke felt some resentment as well. This was all because Patriarch Arcanum had doted on Youngflame Nong too much; otherwise, how could all of this nonsense have occurred?

“Once news of this battle spreads, the various major powers of the imperial capital will most likely all learn about Ji Ning. My Youngflame clan will have truly lost face.” The Godplume Duke shook his head. Then, by himself, he boarded his Immortal carriage and departed from the imperial capital to go pay his respects to Patriarch Arcanum.

After the Imperial Guards under the command of Xiamang Hong returned to their headquarters, the news that Ning’s Primaltwin had killed a Loose Immortal quickly spread throughout the entire headquarters. The Imperial Guard was the most important military which guarded the imperial capital; all of the various major clans had disciples within it, and so this news quickly spread to all of the major clans as well.

Now they all understood that it wasn’t that Ji Ning didn’t know his own limits; rather, it was that he did indeed have enough ability to back up his actions.

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Stillwater Commander. The Black-White College.

Amongst the powers that paid the most attention to Ning, the one which cared the most was the Black-White College. Within the Headmaster’s Hall of the Black-White College.

“Apprentice-nephew headmaster, why have you asked us to all gather here?”

“Senior apprentice-brother, for what reason have you asked us to hurry here so late at night?”

The first generation Immortals and the second generation Primal Daoists who were gathered within the hall all spoke out to ask questions.

“Don’t be impatient. Listen to me read this intelligence report.”

Daoist Jadesea, the Headmaster, was holding a copy of an intelligence report sent from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. He read aloud, “Tonight, in the Kindwater clan’s Cloudwater Manor located in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, Kindwater Xiaolou hosted a banquet for Ji Ning. Ji Ning attended with a troop of Golden Imperials. Halfway through the banquet, Immortal Floatcloud suddenly appeared. He first used a Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle to ambush Ji Ning, who was heavily injured but managed to stay alive. Immortal Floatcloud then utilized the Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation to seal off the surrounding area, then engaged in a one-on-one fight with Ji Ning. Ji Ning’s Primaltwin suddenly emerged. His Primaltwin had already reached the peak Primal level. By using a sword formation technique involving hundreds of Heaven-ranked flying swords, he executed Immortal Floatcloud.”

The hall was completely silent.

Everyone was speechless for a moment...and then, a storm of commotion.

“Apprentice-nephew headmaster, are you sure about what you read?”

“Do you speak the truth?”

“Ji Ning’s Primaltwin killed Immortal Floatcloud?”

None of them could believe it. Many of them had actually been present when Ning had joined the school. That little fellow who had only been a Zifu Disciple...after just ten or so years, he had killed a Loose Immortal? Was this a joke?

“This is a report from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. How could they lie about something like this?” Daoist Jade Sea looked at his fellow disciples.

“Wonderful, wonderful.” Immortal Fivecraze called out, “This is absolutely wonderful. Spread the news. Let all of the disciples of our Black-White College learn of this matter!”

Some would celebrate, some would mourn. News of Ning’s battle spread throughout the entire imperial capital, and it also spread to the ears of certain people located in many other commandery cities. Some celebrated, some sighed in amazement, some felt jealousy, and some felt disdain.

Highwater Commander. The Dongyan Mountains.

Late night. Within a mountain peak inside the Dongyan Mountains.

Ninelotus was seated by herself at the edges of a cliff. The cold night wind felt as sharp as knives of ice, but Ninelotus allowed the wind to blow against her as she continued to sit there silently. Ever since she and Ning had parted ways at the Witchriver Immortal Estate, Ninelotus had begun to enjoy sitting by herself in this quiet place at night, a time of absolute stillness. She would just watch quietly until the sun rose.

“Little Yun.” Suddenly, a voice rang out. Ninelotus turned to look. A very beautiful woman walked over; it was her mother.

Ninelotus’ mother looked at her daughter, feeling quite pained for her. Ninelotus and her were extremely close. When Ninelotus had returned from the Witchriver Immortal Estate, she had been truly been heartbroken, but had no one to talk to about it. Her mother had consoled her, and eventually, Ninelotus had told her mother about the pain in her heart. Only then did her mother realize that her daughter had very nearly chosen to completely walk the same path with Ji Ning.

“Little Yun, are you still not over it?” The mother sat down as well, looking at her daughter.

“I’ve been over it for quite some time,” Ninelotus said, gently shaking

her head. "I just continue to feel ashamed."

"If you feel ashamed, how can you say you are over it?" Her mother shook her head. "No need to be ashamed. This Ji Ning, he isn't worth you feeling ashamed over. He just came from a backwater clan; how good could his upbringing have possibly been? The two of you belong in completely separate worlds. There's no way the two of you could've been together. No way at all."

"Enough," Ninelotus said softly.

"You are going to command the entire Dongyan clan, and the Forefather of the Dongyan clan has full faith in you. You need to stir yourself up. You might not be able to forget about him now, but in a few centuries or millennia, you'll realize that he was actually just a very ordinary passerby in your life. Nothing more than a bumpkin. Forget about him," Ninelotus' mother said.

Before Ninelotus was born, her mother and her father had decent lives in the Dongyan clan, but were quite ordinary figures. However, after Ninelotus was born, she was loved and doted upon by the Dongyan clan's Forefather, who trained her and assigned her to be the next clan leader. Thus, Ninelotus' father and mother saw their statuses skyrocket, and they now had a very great deal of power within the Dongyan clan.

"He isn't a bumpkin." Ninelotus stared at her mother. "He is my former Dao-companion, and a true genius!"

"And what good is a genius? He might just end up being killed by the Youngflame clan," her mother said angrily.

"Enough!" Ninelotus was growing angry as well.

Her mother forced down her anger. Ninelotus was the next clan leader, after all, and so normally she and her husband would listen to Ninelotus. But with regards to Ji Ning...the mother had always nursed a belly full of anger. How exalted a status did her daughter have? How could she possibly be together with someone who came from a backwater tribe? That was an absolute travesty.

“Mistress, mistress!” Suddenly, a female servant flew in on a flying sword, landing on the mountain peak.

“Mm?” Ninelotus looked at her servant.

“The Heavenly Treasures Mountain sent an intelligence report. It has to do with young master Ji Ning,” the female servant said.

Ninelotus waved her hand, and the intelligence report scroll immediately flew towards her. By her side, her mother said unhappily, “You said you are over it, but you continue to pay attention to his intelligence reports?”

“Does being over it mean that I can no longer pay attention to news regarding him?” Ninelotus gave her mother a glance, then unfurled the scroll to read it. A look of shock and amazement appeared on her face.

“Let me take a look. What’s this all about? Was he killed by the Youngflame clan?” Her mother snatched it over to take a read. And as she did...she was so shocked that she jumped to her feet.

“Ki-ki-killed Immortal Floatcloud of the Youngflame clan?” She was astonished. “He’s only trained for thirty years, right? How could, how, how could...”

“I told you. He is a genius.” Ninelotus said softly, “Mother, go home. Let me be by myself for a while.”

Her mother was truly stunned by this news as well. She simply couldn’t comprehend it. How could this young fellow from a backwater tribe, who was even younger than her own daughter, have actually killed a supreme Loose Immortal?

Stunned, she left obediently. The maidservant left as well.

Ninelotus sat there by herself, silent.

“As long as you are doing well, I can be at ease. Ji Ning...stay alive.” Ninelotus could only pray silently in her heart. When she had chosen the path of becoming the next leader of the Dongyan clan, she had decided to follow this path to its completion. As for Ji Ning? All she could do was

silently pray for him in her heart.

This was because, after their parting at the Witchriver Immortal Estate...

“You shall be you, and I shall be me...”

Chapter 33: From Whence Came, To Where Go

It was a late, cold winter night. The temperature was bone-chillingly low.

But Princess Xiyue, of King Yan's Estate, was filled with burning rage. She angrily slammed her hand against the table. "The Youngflame clan is truly damnable. They actually dare to attempt an assassination within the imperial capital. Damnable, damnable, absolutely damnable!"

"Cousin, although the Youngflame clan sent a Loose Immortal Deathsworn, that person ended up dying in my hands," Ji Ning said. "Don't be so angry, cousin."

"How can I not be angry?" Princess Xiyue looked towards Ning. "I'm still covered in cold sweat. Fortunately, you are strong and were able to block both the Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needles as well as Immortal Floatcloud. If not...little brother, aside from Grandpa, you are my own family."

If her one and only little brother would have died...Princess Xiyue didn't even know what she would've done.

"The Youngflame clan is utterly damnable," Princess Xiyue said, so angry that she was shaking.

"Their strategy this time of sending out a Loose Immortal Deathsworn failed. I imagine that for now, they won't have any other tricks up their sleeves; so long as I stay within the imperial capital, the Youngflame clan shouldn't be able to do anything to me," Ning hurriedly consoled his cousin.

Princess Xiyue took a deep breath, then nodded. "Right. There is nothing else they can do to you. I imagine that a year later though, during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, they will use the rules of the Conclave to act against you."

"Against others who are at the peak Wanxiang level...although I don't

dare say that I am unequaled in the world, I should be able to keep myself alive.” Ning’s eyes suddenly lit up. “Cousin, my Primaltwin just finished binding the storage treasure which the deceased Immortal Floatcloud left behind.”

“Oh?” Yuchi Xiyue’s eyes lit up as well. “Let’s see what sort of treasure Immortal Floatcloud left behind. However...since he dared to attempt to assassinate you, and also carried a Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle and a Bloodcoil Heavenlock Formation with him, I imagine that he no longer had many other treasures on him.”

“Let me take a close look.” Ning nodded. He immediately began to have his Primaltwin, located within the underwater estate, to carefully investigate each treasure. Suddenly, Ning revealed a look of astonishment.

“What is it?” Yuchi Xiyue asked hurriedly.

“The other treasures are as I expected, but I found a scroll.” Ning waved his hand, and a golden scroll suddenly appeared within it, emanating ripples of power that were ancient and strange.

“This scroll...?” Yuchi Xiyue looked at it, also curious. Ning unfurled the scroll. Atop the golden scroll, there was just a single, simple line of characters. They stated:

“From whence come, to where go. Xiamang Xun.”

Every single stroke was simple and plain, but an aura of majesty exploded forth from them. Both Ning and Xiyue felt their hearts tremble; they felt as if they were facing the heavens themselves. Even Ning, when facing that ancient Fiendgod in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains, hadn’t felt such terror.

Whoosh. Ning hurriedly closed the scroll, and only then did the terrifying majesty completely disappear.

“What in the world is this?” Xiyue was absolutely amazed.

“I don’t know either.” Ning shook his head.

“Just a single line of characters; from whence come, to where go. And a

single, simple signature inscription – Xiamang Xun. Who exactly is Xiamang Xun? Can it be that he is an ancient member of the imperial Xiamang clan?” Xiyue was completely puzzled. “Why haven’t I ever heard of this name before?”

Ning said with a frown, “The person who wrote the line of words should be named Xiamang Xun...and judging from the majestic power from those words, he should be an incredibly powerful figure.”

“I’ll go ask Grandpa,” Xiyue immediately said. “Wait a moment for me.”

“Right now? So late at night?” Ning was amazed.

“It’s fine. My grandfather is a Celestial Immortal; do you think there is a big difference between day and night for him? And he lives by himself; he doesn’t even let maidservants move close to him. It’s fine for me to find him late at night. And I’m in quite an uneasy mood as well; I feel as though this scroll is quite extraordinary. Wait a moment; I’ll be back shortly.” Xiyue hurriedly departed.

In just the amount of time needed to boil a kettle of tea.

Xiyue once more flew back gracefully, her face filled with excitement.

“Cousin, what’d he say?” Ning was quite curious as well as to exactly what this scroll is.

“Do you know who Xiamang Xun is?” Xiyue had a secretive look on her face.

“Who?” Ning asked. He had never heard of this name before.

“He is his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of our Grand Xia Dynasty!” Xiyue whispered to him, “He’s also the founder of the Grand Xia Dynasty, and the sovereign of this major world.”

“His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor?” Ning was awestruck. The Grand Xia Emperor stood far above them. He was the sovereign of this entire major world, and his power filled the skies. In fact, it was said that the Grand Xia Emperor could even sit down and speak to the Celestial Emperor as equals. One was the Emperor of a major world of the mortal

realms; the other was the Emperor of the Deva realms.

This was how things had been since the Fiendgod Era.

The Grand Xia Emperor had never been anyone else. He rarely showed himself; after all, this ancient dynasty which he had founded and which had existed for countless millions of years had long ago stabilized. It had its own laws, and most matters could be handled by his senior officials.

He was powerful. After all, he had single-handedly established an enormous dynasty and unified the world, after the end of the Fiendgod Era.

He was mysterious. Over the course of countless years, he had almost never shown himself.

He was exalted. No one in the Grand Xia Dynasty dared to go against his decrees.

As the sovereign of this major world, who had stood at its very peak from the Fiendgod Era until now, a figure who the vast majority of Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals couldn't even approach...very few people even knew his name.

"Right. His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor. This is his name." Xiyue was extremely excited. "Xiamang Xun...that's the name of his Imperial Majesty."

"Xiamang Xun, his Imperial Majesty...the Emperor..." Ning's heart was suddenly filled with fright and nervousness.

In his subconscious...he suddenly felt as though a pair of eyes was staring directly at him.

Previously, when he hadn't known this was the name of the Emperor, Ning hadn't felt anything. But now that he knew...he felt in his subconscious as though a pair of eyes had suddenly turned towards him.

"Do you know what this scroll is?" Xiyue didn't sense anything amiss at all. All she felt was excitement and energy. "A dharmic decree of reincarnation! This is a dharmic decree that was personally penned by the

Grand Xia Emperor. If you possess this decree, once you perish, the dharmic decree will escort and accompany your soul into the Netherworld Kingdom. When the Yama-Kings of the Ten Halls see this dharmic decree, they will naturally give some face to our Grand Xia Emperor. The line of ‘from whence come, to whence go’ is an instruction; it means that the bearer is to reborn back into the major world and the clan from whence he last lived in.”

Ning was enlightened.

The Yama-Kings of the Ten Halls. The Lord of Cui Palace. All of them had exalted statuses in the Netherworld Kingdom. For them, letting a few Immortals return to their own major world and clans was nothing more than a minor matter. It could also be viewed as helping to build up ties between themselves and the major power who wrote the dharmic decree.

“Right. My grandfather said that you are not to rashly tell others of the name of his Imperial Majesty,” Xiyue said hurriedly. “According to what my grandfather said, if you say his Imperial Majesty’s name aloud, his Imperial Majesty will sense it. However, since we are within King Yan’s Estate, his Imperial Majesty won’t mind too much.”

“Understood. I won’t tell others,” Ning immediately said. In his heart, however, he felt shocked. So just now, when he felt in his subconscious as though a pair of eyes were paying attention to him...it had probably been his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor.

Time flowed on. News of Ning’s Primaltwin’s slaying of Immortal Floatcloud spread, and Ning’s fame grew greater and greater. In the imperial capital, almost everyone believed that Ning had an exceedingly high level of insight into the Dao; far higher, at least, than Immortal Floatcloud possessed. Otherwise, how could he have so fought him, despite Immortal Floatcloud being at a higher tier of power?

.....

Stillwater Commandery. Within a private training room in the Black-White College.

The Sloppy Daoist, the number one figure amongst the third generation

disciples, was seated in the lotus position. He was only wearing pants, his upper body unclad. The skin on his upper body was actually covered with runes that looked like the shell of a tortoise, and series of ancient-feeling ripples of power poured out from him.

Whoosh.

Suddenly, within the private training room, the illusion of an incomparably enormous Turtle-Snake appeared. This Turtle-Snake filled nearly the entire training room, and the Sloppy Daoist stood on the illusory Turtle-Snake's back. The entire Turtle-Snake began to move, and both the turtle head and the serpent head emitted growling roars.

A layer of turtle shell began to appear on the Sloppy Daoist's entire body as he sat there, but his eyes were like the eyes of a snake, capable of filling the hearts of viewers with terror. His aura was incredibly ancient and powerful.

"Eh?" The Sloppy Daoist suddenly frowned. In his subconscious, he could feel something calling to him. It was...

"The Conclave of Immortal Destiny?" The Sloppy Daoist mumbled to himself, "What's going on? Why is it that when I'm training in the Black Tortoise 1 divine ability, my subconscious is foretelling that this upcoming Conclave is going to be quite important. It seems as though it is a major chance for me."

The powerful call was so strong that the Sloppy Daoist was almost unable to suppress it.

The Sloppy Daoist knew very well that this sort of subconscious feeling didn't need to be doubted; if he could sense that it was going to be a major stroke of luck for him, then he had to go.

"I don't like fighting and struggling with others. I just want to quietly relax and train. But...I didn't expect that in the end, I still have to go to this Conclave of Immortal Destiny." The Sloppy Daoist nodded lightly. "What shall be, shall be. Those things that are meant to be mine will be; for those things that aren't meant to be mine, there's no need to force it. I'll go give this Conclave a try and test out these geniuses of our major

world.”

“I’ve just reached the second Cycle of my Black Tortoise divine ability. I was planning to break through to the Primal level, but it now seems that I shouldn’t be in a hurry. After this Conclave of Immortal Destiny is concluded, I’ll make my breakthrough.” The Sloppy Daoist no longer considered this matter, and began to train once more.

The enormous phantom of a Turtle-Snake once more filled the entire training room.

The Sloppy Daoist was like an ancient, primordial Fiendgod. He sat there quietly, meditating.

.....

In the great Darknorth Sea, there was an Immortal island known as Goldcrow Island. The master of this island was referred to as Immortal Goldcrow; he was a truly mighty Void-level Earth Immortal. Although he had only reached the Void level a century ago, he had been famous for a long period of time. He had the lineage of the Golden Crow, and so although he was merely a Void-level Earth Immortal, he was close to Celestial Immortals in power.

In the Darknorth Sea, there were countless powers who wanted to befriend him, but Immortal Goldcrow was solitary and did as he pleased. As someone with the lineage of the Golden Crows, and as a man with a strange temper who was quite bloodthirsty, there were very few powers who dared to antagonize him.

Within Goldcrow Island.

A golden-robed Immortal Goldcrow was seated at the front of a grand palace, expounding on the Dao. Before him were six young men and women who were listening reverently. These were the six major disciples of Immortal Goldcrow.

During a pause in the expounding of the Dao, the eldest of the six disciples, a human, spoke out and asked, “Master, I heard that the Grand Xia Dynasty is about to hold the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. Your

disciple wishes to go; may I?”

“You, with your level of power, plan to go to the Conclave of Immortal Destiny? Do you want to die?” Immortal Goldcrow responded calmly, but as soon as his words came out, his face suddenly changed.

*

1. This term ‘Xuanwu’literally translates as ‘Black Warrior’, but is also supposed to be, in Chinese mythology, either the name of the Black Tortoise/Turtle-Snake of the Four Beasts, or the Immortal whose pet is the Black Tortoise.

Chapter 34: A Gathering of Heroes

Immortal Goldcrow could sense a powerful beckoning coming from his subconscious, from deep in his soul.

“Why do I suddenly have such a powerful premonition?” Immortal Goldcrow was stunned; as an Immortal cultivator, he placed a great deal of faith in his subconscious premonitions. “It seems as though this Conclave of Immortal Destiny will be very important to me...as though it is calling for me to attend...”

“Master, your disciple isn’t that bad. If I truly am unable to win it, then I will immediately give up and admit defeat.” The senior disciple, unhappy, hurriedly added, “This Conclave of Immortal Destiny will see countless geniuses from this major world gather together. A chance like this will probably only come once in a lifetime.”

Immortal Goldcrow, whose mind had been wandering, quickly returned to his senses. “Enough!” Immortal Goldcrow snapped with a frown, still seated at the front of the hall. “That little bit of talent you possess; you think that’s ‘not bad’? You have always stayed in a distant island and your experiences are very shallow. You’ve only heard of the Conclave; you have no idea how formidable the geniuses participating in the Conclave truly are. This is a report from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain regarding the previous Conclave; go ahead and read it.” As he spoke, he produced a book in his hand, then tossed it out. His senior disciple hurriedly caught it.

“To enter the Conclave without having at least a bit of ability...you won’t even have a chance to admit defeat.” Immortal Goldcrow rose to his feet. Whoosh. He transformed into a rainbow, disappearing from their sight.

“Eldest apprentice-brother, you angered Master.”

“Eldest apprentice-brother, let me take a look at this book as well. How formidable are the participants of the Conclave?” The other junior apprentice-brothers and junior apprentice-sisters all crowded around as

well. As for Immortal Goldcrow, he had already arrived within his own Immortal estate.

This Immortal estate could not be carried away, but it had tremendous power.

No one else was inside the estate.

Immortal Goldcrow quickly entered a pavilion, within which sat a black-robed man. The black-robed man and Immortal Goldcrow appeared nearly identical; only, Immortal Goldcrow had a stronger and more bloodthirsty aura.

“It seems as though the reason I had that premonition is because my true body is still at the peak Wanxiang level.” The black-robed man rose to his feet. “Although I have already had a stroke of great fortune, from my subconscious premonition...it seems as though this Conclave is going to be an extremely important one. I might be able to truly soar into the heavens at this Conclave.”

“If I, Bu Yi, wish to become a Celestial Immortal, it seems that my chance will come through this Conclave of Immortal Destiny.” The black-robed man continued to mutter to himself.

He had been the son of a fisherman. In his youth, he accompanied his father out to sea to catch fish, but because of a great storm, the waves had caused the ship to capsize. He had passed out, and by the time he had woken up, he had found out to his astonishment that he had entered an estate in the bottom of the sea.

This was an estate left behind by a powerful predecessor, and was filled with many cultivation techniques, arts, divine abilities, and even some supreme visualization techniques, along with magic treasures and curious items. There had even been an amount of liquefied elemental essence which had accumulated over the course of years within the estate, forming a giant pond with at least five million kilograms. Amongst the various precious treasures, he had also discovered a Golden Crow’s egg. His youthful self had settled down in the estate, focusing on his training.

Most likely, he had been a cultivator in his past life as well; his soul was innately powerful to begin with, and with the aid of the supreme visualization techniques, when his true body had reached the Wanxiang level, he had split his soul, using the created half to possess the Golden Crow's egg. Afterwards, the egg had hatched, and the Golden Crow had been born.

This Golden Crow had an extremely pure lineage; only after training to the Void level had he been able to transform into human shape.

Over the course of many long years, Bu Yi had wandered the great Darknorth Sea, experiencing many life-and-death dangers. Thanks to the Golden Crow Primaltwin body he had acquired thanks to his great stroke of fortune as a youth, he had managed to overcome those dangerous situations and profit from them. After his Primaltwin had experienced the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations, he had decided to break through to become a Void-level Earth Immortal. He had more than two hundred years before the next calamity descended; for Bu Yi, this was more than enough time.

"Although my Primaltwin's body is that of a Golden Crow and is extremely powerful..." the black-robed Bu Yi shook his head. "But the body is a possessed one. I'm a human, whereas Golden Crows are monsters. Although I possessed the egg...I was at most able to complete a 70% or 80% fusion with it. Training to the Void level is most likely my limit. To overcome the tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal? There's no hope at all!"

Possessing a Golden Crow's egg was a stroke of tremendous fortune. When he had been very weak and young, he hadn't hesitated at all to make this choice.

However, a Primaltwin acquired through possession wouldn't be sufficiently well fused together, and becoming a Celestial Immortal was difficult to begin with. Even creatures such as a Golden Crow Godbird with exceedingly pure Golden Crow lineages would find it hard to overcome the Celestial Tribulation. He, whose soul and body had only fused 70% or 80%, had almost no chance of overcoming it at all. He knew

this quite well.

“I can sense that this Conclave of Immortal Destiny is a chance for me.”

“I, Bu Yi, have roamed and dominated the Darknorth Seas. It has always been my Primaltwin, ‘Immortal Goldcrow’, who was famous. This time... my true body shall reveal its own brilliance as well at this Conclave of Immortal Destiny.” The black-robed Bu Yi felt tremendous eagerness.

Three days later.

Immortal Goldcrow gave instructions to his disciples to train hard, stating that he was going out for some wandering...and then quietly left, heading towards the imperial capital.

.....

A small ship was flying through the misty clouds, atop which was a black-robed man seated in the lotus position, a sharp, saber-hacking aura emanating from him.

“Eh?” The black-robed man suddenly opened his eyes. Previously, his eyes had been closed as he was meditating, but the Conclave of Immortal Destiny had suddenly come to his mind, and as it did, his subconscious began to whisper to him.

“After bidding Master farewell, I began to rove through the various major worlds to adventure and train. This world of the Grand Xia Dynasty is already my ninth major world. I completely have no interest in this so-called ‘Conclave of Immortal Destiny’; after all, I apprenticed myself to Master long ago. But why is it that I suddenly have a feeling...as though I should go participate? It seems as though if I don’t go, I’ll miss something or will lose something.” The black-robed man was mystified.

However, he didn’t doubt the premonitions of his subconscious.

“If that’s the case...then I might as well make a trip to the imperial capital of the Grand Xia and participate in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. I want to see how formidable the geniuses of this major world are.” The black-robed man willed it, and the air around the small ship began to shimmer. It then disappeared completely; he had used a void

teleportation technique to head directly towards the imperial capital.

.....

An ordinary tavern within a commandery city of the Grand Xia. A dirty-looking maiden was completely drunk, and there was even some straw in her hair. She continued to call out loudly, "More wine, quick, more wine!"

"Miss, you've used up all your money already," the tavern waiter hurriedly said.

The dirty-looking maiden opened her eyes. "Used up?"

"Listen up, all of you. I'll let you guys hit or kick me as you please; I definitely won't fight back at all. Buuut, you have to help me pay some money for wine. You don't need to pay too much; just a gourd's worth of wine is enough. Just let me fill up my gourd," the dirty-looking maiden called out.

"Beat you as I please?" Instantly, a newcomer was intrigued.

"Heh, yet another poor bastard is going to fall for it."

"That gourd just won't fill up no matter how you try."

Some of the regulars were secretly muttering to each other. The guest who had wanted to give her a kick for fun felt that something was off and immediately stopped himself.

The dirty maiden, holding that gourd of wine, looked around herself. No one had come to hit her.

"I'll let you hit or kick me as you please. I definitely won't fight back," the dirty maiden called out.

"...ugh. It seems I need to switch places again. I can't swindle too much in a little place like this anyhow. Why don't I go to a larger place...say, the imperial capital, the largest city of them all?"

The maiden was suddenly stunned.

Her blurry, drunken eyes suddenly grew clear.

"The Conclave of Immortal Destiny?"

She could feel a powerful call from it.

Originally, in accordance with the way she trained her Dao, she shouldn't have participated in the Conclave at all. But her subconscious premonition couldn't be wrong.

"As soon as I had the idea to go to the imperial capital, I immediately felt a strong premonition regarding the Conclave of Immortal Destiny...it seems as though I truly will have to go attend. Perhaps this Conclave of Immortal Destiny will be of help to me in overcoming the tribulation and becoming a Celestial Immortal. I've reincarnated nine times now...if I fail again, then I truly will have no more hope for the future."

Whoosh. The drunken woman suddenly disappeared from within the tavern. As for the ordinary mortals within the tavern, they didn't notice anything at all. It was as though this maiden had never appeared in their midst before at all.

.....

The truly formidable figures who had secluded themselves throughout the vast Grand Xia Empire, including some truly peerless monsters who had originally disdained from attending the Conclave, all felt a call from their subconscious. All of them changed their minds, hastening towards the imperial capital.

The imperial capital. King Yan's Estate. Ji Ning's Immortal estate. There was a lake in front of it, and atop the lake, there was a small ship. Ning was lying down in the middle of the ship, allowing it to drift where it pleased.

Perhaps because he had grown into a habit of drifting on a boat at Serpentwing Lake, when Ning lay down in a boat and let it drift where it please, his soul felt exceptionally calm and empty. It was even often of benefit to him in pondering secret arts.

"Young master Ji Ning." A maidservant, standing at the side of the lake, called out.

A handsome, slender fur-clad youth suddenly stood up from within the

distant wooden boat. With a single step, he disappeared from the boat and reappeared on the shore.

“Young master Ji Ning,” the maidservant said respectfully, “A group of people are at the royal estate and wish to meet you.”

“Meet me? Who are they?” Ning asked.

“They say...that they are your fellow disciples from your school, or something like that,” the maidservant said.

Ning’s eyes lit up. He immediately transformed into a gust of wind, howling through the air as he disappeared.

King Yan’s Estate’s front gate. A gust of wind blew past, and Ning appeared at the entrance.

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning!” A white-robed youth ran over excitedly.

“Junior apprentice-brother Northson.” Ning, upon seeing his junior apprentice-brother, felt extraordinarily happy as well. The two of them clutched each other in a bear hug before letting go.

Ning had long ago begun to view Northson as he would a true little brother.

“Senior apprentice-brother, you truly are amazing. You actually produced a Primaltwin and even killed Immortal Floatcloud.” Northson was extraordinarily excited. “When I was in the Black-White College, I heard the news and was absolutely tickled. Hahaha, you killed Youngflame Nong and that Fiendgod, and then you caused even a Deathsworn sent out by the Youngflame clan to perish. Hehehe, I wonder how infuriated the Youngflame clan is right now?!”

“Hopefully, they’ll die from their anger,” Ning said. And then he looked at the other three in front of him. “Senior apprentice-brother Vastriver, senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei, and eldest apprentice-brother...why have you all come?”

The figures in front of him were the Sloppy Daoist, Yu Wei, Vastriver,

and Northson.

Yu Wei laughed, “Both myself and our eldest apprentice-brother are participating in this Conclave. Senior apprentice-brother Vastriver and junior apprentice-brother Northson are here to watch. I imagine that once the Conclave truly begins, quite a few other disciples of the Black-White College will come to watch as well. After all, actual participants are quite few in number, but quite a few spectators will be present.”

“Eldest apprentice-brother, you are attending as well?” Ning was surprised. When he had chatted with Yu Wei and the others about the Conclave, it seemed as though the only member of the Black-White College to attend would be Yu Wei. The others wouldn’t participate, and the leader of the third generation disciples, the Sloppy Daoist, wasn’t planning to attend either.

“What should happen, will happen,” the Sloppy Daoist said with a laugh.

“This time, our Black-White College will have a total of three participants in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei, senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, and eldest apprentice-brother. Our Black-White College is definitely going to be famous!” Northson was filled with anticipation.

Chapter 35: The End Days for Snowdragon Mountain

Yuchi Xiyue was also aware that Ji Ning's fellow disciples had arrived, and she arranged a special banquet for them, inviting the disciples of the Black-White College to attend.

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On this very day. In the distant Stillwater Commandery. A giant warship, covered with flowery golden tattoos, was howling through the air, sending out waves of energy in its wake. Aboard the warship there was a large, tightly clustered group of Golden Imperials. Upon the deck, there were also nine black-armored Captains of the Imperial Guard, each of whom emanated unfathomably mighty auras.

"Snowdragon Mountain is up ahead," a black-uniformed man said with a laugh.

"Sorry to trouble you, fellow Daoist Skyfall," one of the nine Golden Imperial captains said.

"This is a small matter. It is the good fortune of myself, Northmont Skyfall, to be able to assist King Yan in handling this matter." Skyfall spoke in a flattering manner, but in his heart, he sighed to himself. "Oh, Snowdragon Mountain...how could you be so foolish as to offend King Yan? Even though in the past King Yan was in dire straits, he still wasn't someone which your puny little Snowdragon Mountain sect could afford to offend. This time, King Yan has sent nine full squads of Golden Imperials over. It seems as though he truly harbors hatred for Snowdragon Mountain. I wonder what exactly Snowdragon Mountain did to him in the past."

Yuchi Snow, Yuchi Mount; their deaths were caused principally by Dong Seven!

Ning and Xiyue naturally hated the man deeply. King Yan knew how his granddaughter felt, and so immediately ordered nine squads of Golden

Imperials to head towards Stillwater Commandery. He instructed them to first notify Stillwater Commandery's Northmont clan of the following: "In the past, when our royal excellency was wandering the world, a feud arose between himself and Snowdragon Mountain. Today, we have come to annihilate Snowdragon Mountain; we'd like to ask the Northmont clan to permit this."

The Northmont clan's response: Annihilate Snowdragon Mountain? A little clan which didn't even have a single Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal? The Northmont clan naturally wouldn't care about this matter. In addition, given how diplomatic King Yan was by first sending people to notify them, the Northmont clan immediately arranged for Northmont Skyfall to personally lead the way, bringing these Golden Imperials directly towards Snowdragon Mountain.

"Here we are." Skyfall pointed towards the area below them. Past the clouds, one could vaguely make out a long, winding mountain range, amongst which were three particularly imposing and tall mountain peaks that vastly surpassed the other three mountains.

"Snowdragon Mountain?" The nine Imperial Guard captains looked down at the base, all nodding slightly.

"First capture Dong Seven, then annihilate Snowdragon Mountain," one of the captains said.

BOOM!

The warship immediately flew downwards, carrying boundless might and power as it soared directly towards the area above Snowdragon Mountain's headquarters. This instantly caused a huge shock within Snowdragon Mountain; who would actually dare to have their warship halt directly above the school? This was too arrogant.

"I wonder which fellow Daoist has arrived at Snowdragon Mountain?" Boom! Boom! Boom! Three figures soared into the skies; they were the three Primal Daoists of Snowdragon Mountain. Daoist Snowplume, Daoist Coldsun, and Daoist Blackdragon.

Upon flying upwards, their gazes were immediately drawn to the eye-

catching, golden-armored soldiers. The terrifying majesty and aura of power emanating from the soldiers caused their hearts to quail.

However, upon seeing the black-uniformed Northmont Skyfall, Daoist Blackdragon hurriedly said, “Senior Skyfall, why have you come to our Snowdragon Mountain? If there’s anything you need, just summon us; we will simply go to you. There’s no need for you to personally make a trip.”

“Senior Skyfall, might I ask why you have come to Snowdragon Mountain? If there is anything you need, just tell us; we will definitely strive to accomplish it,” Daoist Coldsun said hurriedly as well.

All three Primal Daoists were extremely courteous.

“Gentlemen?” Skyfall just looked at the nine Imperial Guard captains; all nine of them were Loose Immortals.

“Found him.” The eyes of one of the captains lit up.

Whoosh!

He took a single step, then disappeared from his original location, reappearing inside the Snowdragon Mountain headquarters. In the blink of an eye, he suddenly flew back with a white-robed youth in tow. The white-robed youth’s face was ashen. His entire body was shaking in abject terror.

“Dong Seven!” Daoist Coldsun called out in shock.

“Grandpa, Grandpa!” The white-robed youth was utterly terrified. He hurriedly called out, “My Zifu has been destroyed, my Zifu has been destroyed!”

Daoist Coldsun’s face instantly changed. A hint of rage was now visible, but he forced it down and said angrily, “Senior Skyfall, what’s this all about? Why have you led people here to apprehend disciples of Snowdragon Mountain? If Snowdragon Mountain has offended you in some way, just tell us; those who deserve to be punished will be. Snowdragon Mountain will definitely give you a satisfactory response.”

“These aren’t my men.” Northmont Skyfall shook his head. “You really

have no vision, have you? You aren't even able to recognize the most formidable soldiers of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, the Golden Imperials!"

"Golden Imperials?" Daoists Coldsun, Blackdragon, and Snowplume were all shocked. Imperial Guards? Even in Stillwater Commandery, Snowdragon Mountain was a fairly ordinary sect, located in a fairly distant location, without even a single Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal to their name. Naturally, they knew very little about the distant imperial capital. Although Daoist Blackdragon would occasionally make a visit to the imperial capital, he had never even seen an Imperial Guard, much less the elite 'Golden Imperials' of the Guard. When they saw the golden armor worn by the soldiers, they had taken them to be soldiers of the Northmont clan of Stillwater!

"Generals," Daoist Blackdragon said hurriedly, "If Snowdragon Mountain has acted offensively in some manner, please tell us."

Daoist Coldsun and Daoist Snowplume were terrified and restless as well.

"We have come on orders to apprehend Dong Seven and wipe out Snowdragon Mountain," one of the captains said coldly.

"Apprehend Dong Seven? Wipe out Snowdragon Mountain?"

Daoist Blackdragon and the other two felt as though thunderbolts had suddenly come crashing down out of the clear sky. Both were stupefied.

Wipe out their school?

Good, good heavens!

Their school was one which had existed for a very long time. Everything had been perfectly fine; why had the Golden Imperials suddenly come to wipe them out?

"Coldsun!" Daoist Blackdragon, upon seeing the captured Dong Seven, instantly understood what this was about. He stared at the nearby Daoist Coldsun, then roared furiously, "It is all your fault. You coddled Dong Seven! Dong Seven has harmed countless people in the outside world;

even in our own school, he's harmed quite a few of our female disciples. But you've always protected him! Dong Seven must have offended a powerful figure at some point, causing our Snowdragon Mountain to now face complete annihilation."

Daoist Coldsun's face was completely ashen now as well.

Daoist Snowplume begged, "Everyone, you can punish Dong Seven as you please. You can even have Snowdragon Mountain do whatever you wish us to do. Just, please give us a way out."

"Everyone." The captain who had apprehended Dong Seven spoke out emotionlessly. "Let's do it."

With this order given, the squads of Golden Imperials immediately began to fly out of the warship.

"FORMATION! PROTECT THE MOUNTAIN!" Daoist Blackdragon let out an earsplitting bellow, and his voice rang out in the ears of every single disciple.

"SEALS!"

"SNOWDRAGON SKYSOAR FORMATION!"

Every single formation and restrictive spell which the previous generations experts of Snowdragon Mountain had every created were instantly activated. One seal after another instantly appeared, hovering in the air. Clouds and mist appeared. One snowy white dragon after another began to appear as well, flying and weaving amidst the skies above the mountains. When a school unleashed all of its stored powers at once, even a Loose Immortal would find it difficult to break through the school.

Rumble....

One divine golden dragon after another began to appear in the skies. There were a total of eight divine golden dragons, each of which was coiled and nearly ten thousand kilometers long, and emanated a majestic presence.

It was true that ordinary Loose Immortals would find it difficult to

break through Snowdragon Mountain's headquarters...but a squad of Golden Imperials consisted of a Loose Immortal commanding forty nine Primal Daoists, all of whom were dressed in Dao-armor, and who joined together to form into a divine dragon! Their might was at the very least comparable to ten ordinary Loose Immortals!

And here...there were nine squads!

Rumble...

The golden dragons coiled and writhed in the sky. A simple thwack from one of the tails caused all of the seals to explode and crack, bursting as if they were soap bubbles.

The captain who had captured Dong Seven just watched from above. As for the other eight squads, they had all transformed into golden dragons and were launching attacks at the below Snowdragon Mountain. With absolute superiority in raw power...they smashed through every single grand sealing formation. As for the so-called bewildering formations? Every single divine dragon was ten thousand kilometers in length; a single trembling movement from them caused entire formations to break apart.

"This, this..." Daoist Coldsun had led his own disciples to form into an enormous Snowdragon. But, upon seeing the might and power of the divine golden dragons, he was so terrified he didn't even dare to go block.

He was a Primal Daoist, leading a group of Wanxiang Adepts and Zifu Disciples in forming a Snowdragon...and he was supposed to fight against a divine dragon formed by a Loose Immortal leading forty nine Primal Daoists? They were on completely separate levels. The difference in power was just too great.

"Oh, Dong Seven...who the hell did you offend..." Daoist Coldsun felt both fury and despair.

"It's finished." Daoist Snowplume led his disciples to block, but at the very first exchange, more than half of his disciples perished and the Snowdragon was completely shattered. A look of despair appeared on Daoist Snowplume's face. "Snowdragon Mountain is finished. Damn us... damn us for not being strict in carrying out the laws of the sect. Our

disciples have caused harm everywhere, and in the end...they finally offended a powerful figure.”

BOOM.

Daoist Snowplume instantly blew apart, causing an enormous storm of elemental ki. He had chosen self-detonation; this way, at least his soul would be able to reincarnate.

.....

Daoist Snowplume self-detonated. Daoist Coldsun was killed. Daoist Blackdragon was killed.

Every single mountain peak that belonged to Snowdragon Mountain was overturned. Under the majestic power of these eight divine dragons that were ten thousand kilometers in length, some parts were crushed down to form a lakebed, while other parts were flattened into plains. In short...not a single true mountain could now be seen.

“This...this...” Dong Seven was completely stunned.

“Fellow Daoist Skyfall, sorry for the trouble. We’ll head straight back to the imperial capital now.”

“This was a small matter. Snowdragon Mountain offended King Yan; they invited annihilation upon themselves. They cannot blame anyone but themselves.”

“Then we’ll leave now.”

“Please do. I won’t send you off.”

The group of Golden Imperials immediately led Dong Seven aboard their warship, then departed. As for Northmont Skyfall, he stared at the former Snowdragon Mountains, which had now been smashed into lakes and plains. He couldn’t help but shake his head. “A small sect like this... they weren’t strict in their rules, and their disciples harmed many. The karmic luck of the school would naturally continue to drop, until finally, one day, annihilation arrived. How utterly laughable...even the imperial clan of the Grand Xia erected the Raindragon Guard and sent them out to

apprehend and execute sinners for the sake of improving their luck, but a small sect like this actually acted with such wild abandon.”

Whoosh. Northmont Skyfall disappeared into thin air, teleporting away.

The imperial capital of the Grand Xia. King Yan’s Estate.

The snow was drifting downwards right now as a group of Golden Imperials entered King Yan’s Estate.

“Brothers, go get some rest, but keep an eye on that Dong Seven. I’m going to go report to the Princess right now,” a captain said, then immediately went to go see her.

Within a wide, spacious hall. A banquet had been prepared here. Ning and Xiyue were currently accompanying Northson and the others, watching the snow while eating and chatting together.

“Reporting to the Princess,” the captain said respectfully as he appeared, “We’ve caught him.”

Ning and Xiyue both looked at the captain, and as they did, both were breathless. Upon hearing the words, “We’ve caught him”, both of them couldn’t help but rise to their feet.

“Everyone, Ji Ning and I have something to attend to. We’ll return shortly,” Yuchi Xiyue said immediately.

Chapter 36: The Grand Xia Emperor

A dark, gloomy room. There were many instruments of punishment located in this room. In the center, there was a punishment rack, atop which was bound a terrified, pathetic-looking white-robed youth.

“This, this...” Dong Seven stared at the punishment instruments, face utterly ashen.

“Who is it? Who exactly did I offend?” Dong Seven was absolutely horrified. “They actually annihilated Snowdragon Mountain.” His previous arrogant demeanor had completely vanished, leaving behind nothing but terror.

The soldiers in the corner of the room just watched quietly. Suddenly...

Rumble...the stone door swung open, and a woman walked in alongside a fur-clad youth. This caused Dong Seven to feel even more uneasy. He didn't recognize these two at all.

“Princess.” The soldier on guard called out with respect.

“You can leave,” Yuchi Xiyue instructed.

“Yes.” The soldier immediately departed, and the stone door once more swung shut.

Yuchi Xiyue and Ji Ning both stared at the terrified, pathetic man bound atop the rack. These two cousins had long ago repeatedly reviewed the intelligence reports regarding Dong Seven. His appearance had been deeply engraved in both their hearts.

“Dong Seven!” Ning's eyes flashed with coldness.

“It was you. It was you. It was you who destroyed my family, who killed my father and caused my mother to die of depression as well.” Xiyue's eyes instantly turned red. She picked up a large ladle, filled with a bubbling, hot silver liquid, then flicked it towards Dong Seven.

Crackle...

The blazing silver liquid splattered on Dong Seven's body. Dong Seven

instantly emitted a miserable wail, and his neck stretched out as his agonized cries rang out. His face was as white as paper.

After he somewhat came back to his senses, he pitifully cried out, “Mercy, mercy!”

Ning’s eyes were red as well. Everything...everything had been a result of this wayward, hedonistic wastrel. This detestable person, this vile little creature who he, Ji Ning, now only looked down upon! But this detestable little creature had caused Ning’s parents as well as his cousin’s parents to all die early on. A feud of familicide...he could not live under the same skies with this man!

“It hurts, it hurts! Mercy!” Dong Qi screamed miserably.

“Hurts?” Ning picked up a blazing branding iron-type magic treasure and walked over. “That was just the start. Dong Seven, don’t be in such a rush. Slowly enjoy this.”

“No, no, no no no—!” Dong Seven felt his own heart quiver. He began to scream miserably once more...but protective formations covered this punishment room, and no one outside could hear him at all.

Ning heated up this branding iron-type magic treasure, filling it with his elemental ki. Instantly, a crackling sound could be heard as he pressed it down against the tattered body of Dong Seven. Smoke and steam arose. After he moved the branding iron away, he saw that Dong Seven’s skin now had the diagram of a flame branded into it, a brand which quietly activated the power of the natural world.

“AHHH!! It hurts, it hurts!” Dong Seven’s entire body was quivering. That brand diagram seemed to be causing his entire body to burn, and this sensation of being burned to death repeatedly nearly caused him to mentally collapse.

The nearby Xiyue said coldly, “Don’t worry. These are all instruments of punishment used by the imperial clan of the Grand Xia. You’ve only tasted two types so far. I won’t let you die that easily. I’ve prepared many fine spirit-pills. I’ll heal you repeatedly and let you taste the more than ten thousand types of corporal punishment the Grand Xia Dynasty has to

offer. I'll let you learn what pain is, what regret is!"

Dong Seven, upon hearing this, nearly broke down. Ten thousand types of punishment? The first two had already nearly driven him to insanity.

"How the hell did I offend you two? What the hell did I do? You must have the wrong person!" Dong Seven was almost crying now.

Rumble...the stone door was once more pushed open. From outside padded in a large, snowy white hound. The stone door then shut once more.

"Do you still recognize me?" Savagery was in the eyes of the Whitewater Hound as he stared at Dong Seven.

"Whitewater Hound?" Dong Seven was stunned. Deep in his memories, a scene from decades ago began to replay. A scene with a tall, muscular man and a loving couple; the wife was pregnant and truly beautiful, with a rare and noble aura. Her pregnancy just added a strange mystique to her charm...and Dong Seven had been incredibly aroused.

And so, he had ordered Yu Dong and Shui Yi to make their moves.

"You remember now?" Ning said coldly. "That couple back then...they were my mother and father."

"The one that was killed by your group back then was my father." Xiyue began to grow even more crazed. Her father had absolutely doted on her when she was a child. His wide, mountain-like shoulders...his loud laughter...his repeated appearances in her dreams...

He was her most beloved father...and she had been her kind and gentle man...

Ning and Xiyue both stared at Dong Seven.

Dong Seven felt coldness in the bottom of his heart.

"It was you who killed Shui Yi and Yu Dong?" Dong Seven said quaveringly.

"Right." Ning nodded. "And now, it is time for you. The principal instigator."

“My cousin was far too gentle; he simply used the Heartburner Art to torment those two.” Xiyue was gnashing her teeth. “Those two died, so that’s that...but as for you, the main culprit? I’m going to let you taste all of the ten thousand-plus punishments the Grand Xia has to offer. When the time comes for you to die, I will absorb your soul into the Furnace of Despair. I am going to torture your soul, every day and every night, for thousands of years...”

Dong Seven’s gaze grew numb as he listened.

Ning looked at his nearby cousin. Although he felt tremendous hatred as well, and also wanted to torture and shatter this man’s soul...compared to his cousin, he was far off.

“Cousin, it’s enough for you to torment his soul for ten days and ten nights,” Ning sent mentally, his eyes red. “There’s no need for you to steep your soul in hatred for thousands of years for the sake of this piece of trash.”

Torturing Dong Seven for thousands of years would also mean that Yuchi Xiyue would be steeped in hatred for thousands of years. Torturing others was a form of tormenting one’s self as well.

“The seeds of my hatred are deep. Little brother, don’t worry about me.” Xiyue’s gaze had become twisted from madness.

As Ning had grown up, he had been taught by his parents for more than ten years, then taught by Immortal Diancai as well. He also had his good friend, Mu Northson; thus, Ning’s inner heart had never become twisted.

As for Xiyue, however...after her parents had died, she had lived by herself and suffered tremendously. She didn’t wish to think back to her days of suffering, but even after being brought back by her maternal grandfather to the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, she remained quite solitary. Only in front of her cousin would her heart feel slightly warm.

.....

Dong Seven died an agonizing death.

After having been tortured for three months and perishing, his soul was

indeed drawn into the 'Furnace of Despair' and tormented for more than another month. In the end...it had been King Yan who intervened. Although Princess Xiyue kept the Furnace of Despair on her own person at all times, and although there was no way an ordinary person could kill a soul that was located with a magic treasure...King Yan could. He destroyed Dong Seven's soul.

"Ji Ning, spend more time with Xiyue. She's given vent to her hatred for nearly half a year now; she should be about done. If she continues like this, then she will completely lose herself to madness. Spend more time with her; this will help her slowly begin to walk out from the grips of hate." King Yan personally chatted with Ning on this, and Ning naturally memorized these words.

Deep autumn.

In the deepest reaches of the skies above the imperial capital, there was a hazy gray void. Whoosh...the dim gray void suddenly parted, revealing an enormous corridor which was filled with a hazy golden light. A large number of black soldiers flew out in columns, and behind them there was a group of black-armored warriors that were riding on celestial horses. Behind the riders, there was an enormous coiling black dragon whose incomparably powerful aura filled the skies. It was pulling an enormous Immortal carriage that emanated golden light. There were golden lamps hanging from the Immortal carriage, and seated atop it was a black-robed man.

This black-robed man had a plain, unassuming face. His eyes, however, seemed to hold thunder within them. Wherever his gaze passed, the world itself seemed about ready to split apart.

His might and prestige caused the surrounding soldiers to feel absolute submission in their trembling hearts.

Behind this Immortal carriage, there was a group of black-armored soldiers who were seated obediently within a warship. This warship was three hundred meters long, but it was much smaller than the Immortal carriage. It must be understood that the black dragon was more than

thirty kilometers long...and the Immortal carriage was roughly the same size as the black dragon.

Whoosh.

The Emperor was out and about, with 999 guards escorting him.

This squad flew downwards, flying directly towards the Skylight Palace. Amidst the clouds at the highest point of the Skylight Palace, a large group of Immortal maidens and soldiers were already waiting. They all fell to their knees. Each of them were at least at the Primal Daoist level... but for them to be able to serve the Grand Xia Emperor was their fortune.

“We bow to you, your Imperial Majesty.” A muscular, two-headed Fiendgod was the first to immediately kneel down and call out the words.

Instantly, the other Immortal maidens and soldiers all knelt down as well. “We bow to you, your Imperial Majesty.”

The black dragon pulled the Immortal carriage downwards. The many black-armored soldiers that were escorting the carriage all quickly separated, moving to stand in different positions.

“Mm.” The black-robed man left the Immortal carriage. With but two steps, he arrived at the nearby imperial throne, then sat down. He looked downwards at them from his position on high, then instructed, “Send an order out to have King Qi come.”

“Yes.” The twin-headed Fiendgod immediately obeyed the order.

The black-robed man continued to sit there on the throne. He swept his gaze forward, seeming to stare through the layers of clouds and be able to inspect everything within the imperial capital.

He sat there on high. This was the Emperor of this major world...the one who had truly, absolutely unified it!

However, he had set his sights on the Three Realms long ago. He rarely came back to spend time in this major world of the Grand Xia.

“A few decades ago, the Netherworld Kingdom of the Three Realms suffered an attack. The Six Paths of Reincarnation were collapsed and

destroyed...and then the attackers suddenly vanished without a trace.” The black-robed Emperor mused softly to himself, “The Netherworld... that is where the souls of the Three Realms reside. How important it is! The defenses there are very tight. The Yama-Kings of the Ten Halls and the Lord of Cui Palace are all Pure Yang True Immortals, and each of them are formidable.”

“Kshitigarbha 1, of the Buddhist schools, stands guard there as well. The Netherworld has some other ancient fellows there as well...it is a place of tremendous power, but upon suffering a sneak attack, it wasn’t able to fight back at all. In a very short period of time, the Six Paths of Reincarnation were destroyed...and they haven’t even been able to find out who caused it or where the attackers came from. Even someone like Master was unable to find out.”

“These forces which lie in the shadows...they are terrifying powerful. And their very first attack was against the Six Paths of Reincarnation.”

“It seems...the Three Realms are about to fall into a state of chaos.” The black-robed Emperor had a look of deep worry within his eyes.

When a tribulation came for the Three Realms as a whole, it would be incredibly terrifying. In the unfathomably ancient past, after Pangu established the world, the first era had been the Primordial era. Afterwards, the Primordial World had been shattered; only then had the three thousand major worlds and the trillions of smaller worlds been created. From this, one could tell how terrifying that storm had been.

“Every single major cataclysm will give birth to some truly supreme heroic figures.” The black-robed Emperor stared downwards towards the imperial capital of the Grand Xia. As the saying went, heroes were born in the midst of chaos. All of the powerful figures of the Three Realms had been born over the course of the truly major tribulations of the past.

“This will be the first Conclave of Immortal Destiny after the destruction of the Six Paths of Reincarnation. Then...most likely, some of those heroic figures that are going to emerge in this era will first appear in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny,” the black-robed Emperor mused to

himself...

*

1. This is the bodhisattva who swore that he would only become a Buddha after emptying out all the hells of their sinners through enlightening mankind.

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